June 17, 1991

THE NEW YORKER

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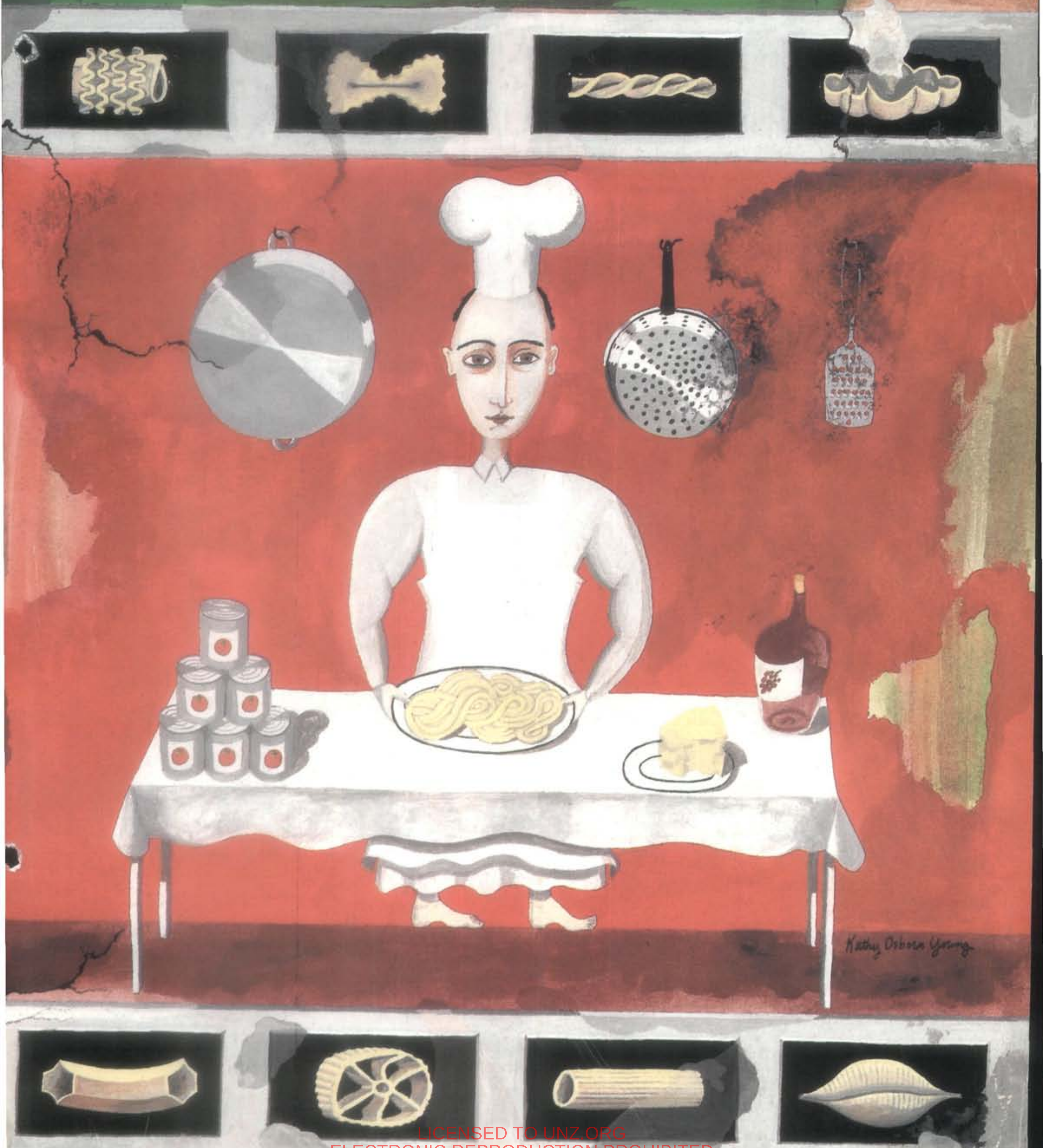
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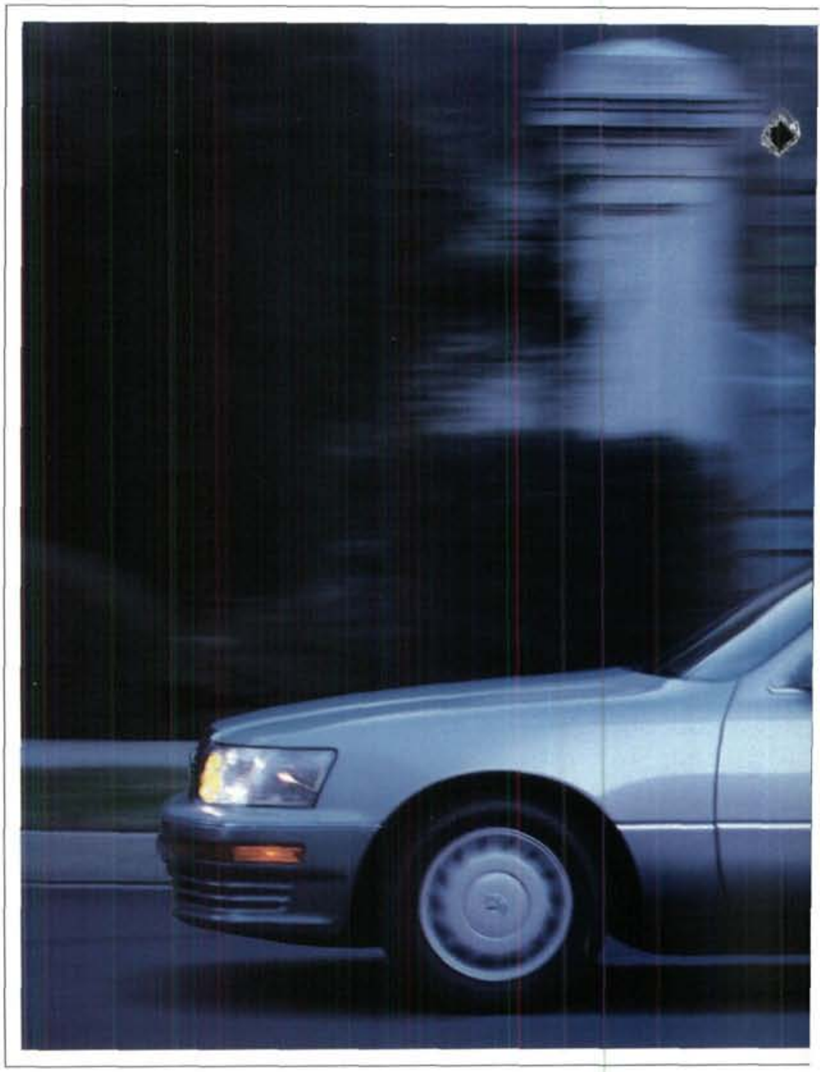

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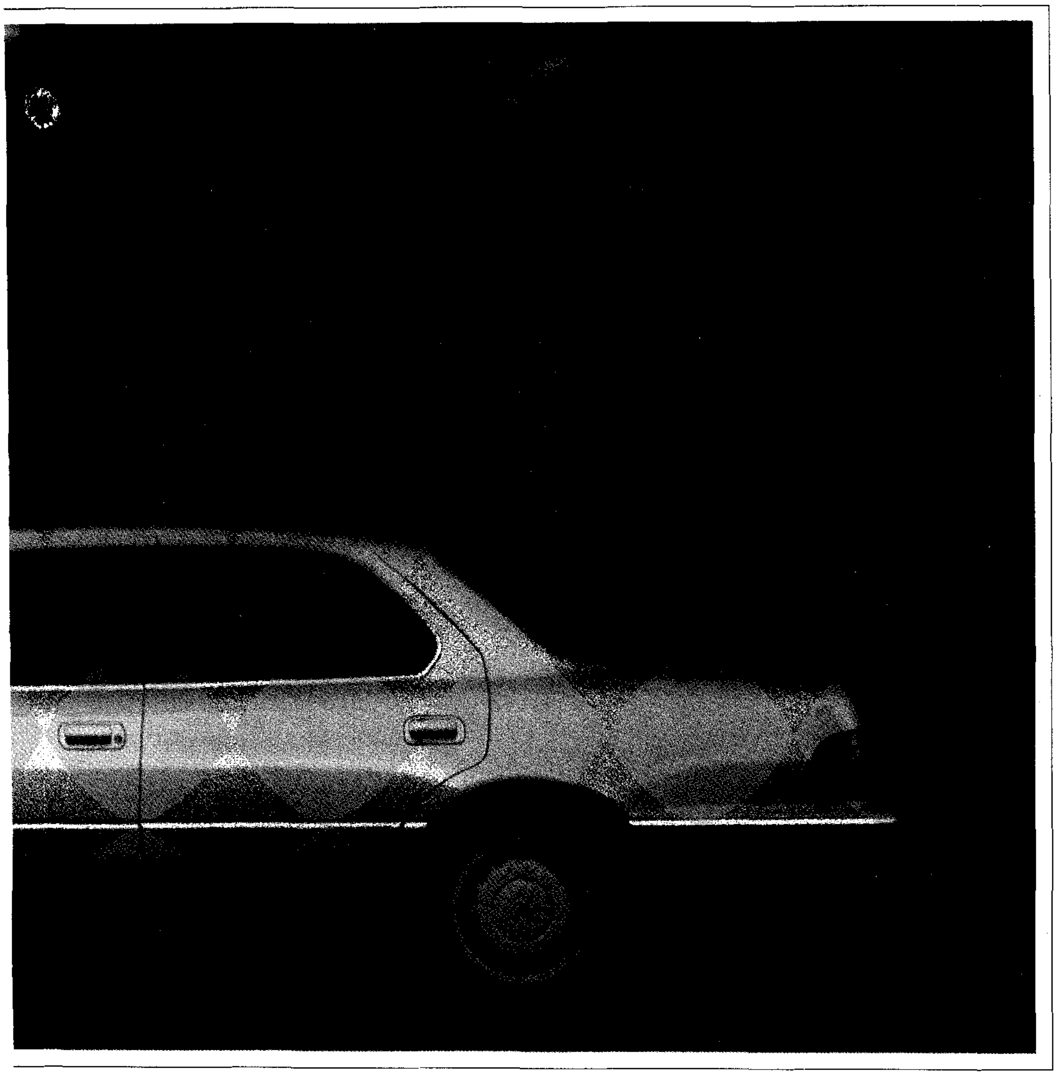

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Gap pocket-t's $10.50, as worn by **SUZANNE VEGA**, singer/songwriter. Photographed by Albert Watson.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WHEN Kevin Kline, as a washed-up actor in the new movie "Soapdish," announced his plans for a one-man "Hamlet," our audience laughed—as much, we suspect, at the idea's seeming novelty as at the crispness of Kline's delivery. We say "seeming" novelty because a one-person approach to Shakespeare isn't new. We saw a solo "Hamlet" in the late seventies, and glimpsed the makings of another one recently while watching Jonathan Pryce, in a film clip from his 1980 stage performance as the Prince, deliver his dead father's lines himself, as if possessed not by the Ghost but by a demon. "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)," which begins performances this week under the aegis of the New York International Festival of the Arts, also has about it the whiff of newness, but, again, it isn't a first. We caught a similar attempt to compress the Bard's thirty-seven plays into a single sit a couple of years back, in London. The British distillation lasted fifteen minutes; the festival offering, by the Los Angeles-based Reduced Shakespeare Company, clocks in at around two hours.

The festival's other Shakespeare evening, "The Tragedy of Macbeth," features accomplished black actors from another R.S.C. (the Royal). For some reason, the play's announced concept, which takes into account current economic and political strife in Africa, started us thinking about the culturally correct "Tempest"s—with imperialist Prosperos, downtrodden Calibans, and freedom-loving Ariels—that will, undoubtedly, be unleashed nationwide next year, in time for the Columbus Day quincentenary. We could be wrong about this "Macbeth," however; the Scottish tragedy has been unusually accommodating of interpretation. Acclaimed twentieth-century adaptations have included Orson Welles' 1936 "voodoo" version and several Kabuki-inspired productions. If the festival's "Macbeth" heightens general interest in the play, we'll think of it as a long-delayed payback of sorts, to the black American actor Ira Aldridge, whose London performances as Aaron in "Titus Andronicus," in the eighteen-fifties, helped pull *that* Shakespearean tragedy out of mothballs.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Bergman On Stage—The Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden presents three works directed by Ingmar Bergman: Strindberg's MISS JULIE, with Lena Olin and Peter Stormare, June 10-12; O'Neill's LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, with Bibi Andersson, June 14-16; and Ibsen's A DOLL'S HOUSE, with Erland Josephson, June 18-20. The plays are performed in Swedish, with simultaneous English translation. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 1-718 636-4100.) (*)

Body and Soul—A new romantic comedy by John Glines. Previews begin June 12. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19			

The New York International Festival of the Arts is taking place all over the city through June 23. For recorded information about performances, call 768-1818; for tickets, call the individual box offices. Festival events are indicated by an asterisk.

Citizen Mind—The Amakhosi company of Zimbabwe in a political theatre work. Opens June 13 at 9:30, and runs through June 16. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.) (*)

Club Soda—A comedy by Leah Kornfeld Friedman. Previews through June 18. Opens June 19 at 8. (WPA, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)—A presentation by Reed Martin, Jess Borgeson, and Adam Long, three actors from L.A. known as the Reduced Shakespeare Company. Opens June 13 at 8, and runs through June 23. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 279-4200.) (*)

Cricot 2—A Polish theatrical troupe presents two works by the late Tadeusz Kantor: DEAD CLASS, June 12-16, and TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY, June 18-23. In Polish. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.) (*)

Encore!—A revue of songs from musicals that the Jewish Repertory Theatre has done in the past. Previews June 11-12. Opens June 13 at 8. (344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

Getting Married—A production of Shaw's comedy, with Victoria Tennant, Lee Richardson, Nicolas Coster, and Linda Thorson. Directed by Stephen Porter. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

A Girl Skipping—A play by Graeme Miller, which is billed as "minimalist music theatre." Opens June 12 at 8, and runs through June 16. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.) (*)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Christine Baranski, Anthony Heald, Swoosie Kurtz, and Nathan Lane in a new play by Terrence McNally. John Tillinger directed. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Prom Queens Unchained—A musical by Larry Goodsight, Keith Herrmann, and Stephen Witkin. In previews. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Selling Off—Dody Goodman and Andrew Bloch in a play by Harris W. Freedman. Previews June 11-12. Opens June 13 at 8. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

The Tragedy of Macbeth—Shakespeare's play, performed by a troupe of actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre of England. Opens June 14 at 8, and runs through June 23. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. For tickets, call 307-7171.) (*)

Uncle Vanya—A production of the Chekhov play by the State Theatre of Lithuania. Performed in Lithuanian, with simultaneous English translation. Opens June 13 at 8, and runs through June 30. (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.) (*)

NEW THIS SEASON

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziemba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Breaking Legs—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia can seldom have been funnier than as a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Victor Argo, Nicolas Surovy, and, above all, Sue Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Charge It, Please—A comedy by Carlos Gorbea. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting the 1991 festival of one-act plays. Series C: "The World at Absolute Zero," by Sherry Kramer; "Salaam, Huey Newton, Salaam," by Ed Bullins; "The Last Yankee," by Arthur Miller; and "Big Al," by Bryan Goluboff. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Closes June 23.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and staging are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Closes June 16.)

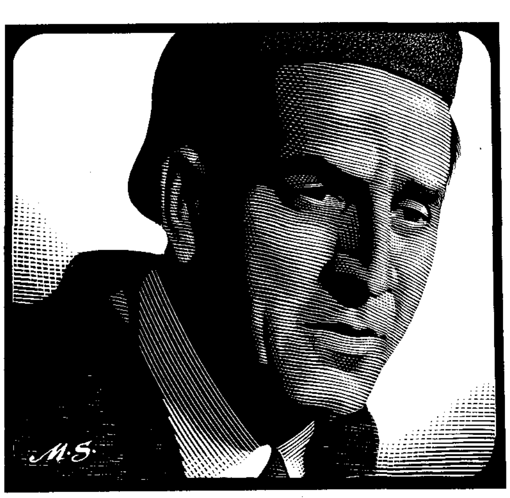
Food and Shelter—A young man, his wife, and their little girl, suddenly homeless, decide to hide out in Disneyland. The husband leaves to search for work, and the wife and the child spend the next few months living in their car and going from place to place in Los Angeles. The play, by Jane Anderson, has its ups and downs, but the performances are good, especially that of Kelly Coffield as the wife. André Ernotte directed. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes June 16.)

Fridays—A 1981 play by Andrew Johns, with Henderson Forsythe and John Peakes. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes June 23.)

The Good Times Are Killing Me—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Also with Kim Staunton, Wendell Pierce, and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes June 23.)

Gypsy—The Tyne Daly-led revival of the great Laurents-Styne-Sondheim musical has returned to Broadway for a limited engagement. It is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Haunted Host and **Safe Sex**—A double bill consisting of a 1964 comedy by Robert Patrick and a revised 1987 comedy by Harvey Fierstein. With Mr.



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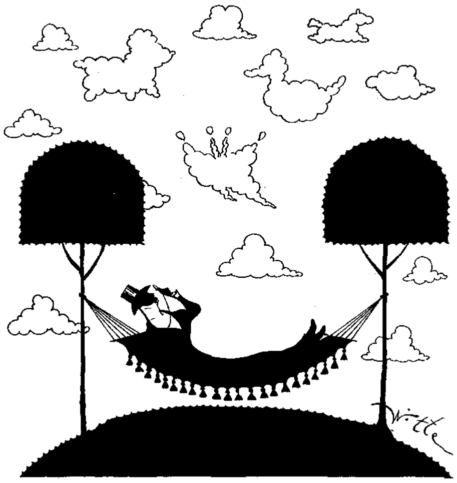
Fierstein and Jason Workman. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—Everett Quinton's new show, which is billed as "a quasimusical." (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes June 30.)

I Hate Hamlet—In Paul Rudnick's jokey farce, Nicol Williamson gives a stunning comedy performance as the ghost of John Barrymore, summoned to aid a young Hollywood actor who has been booked to play Hamlet in the Park. Mr. Williamson is ably supported by some of the other actors, but the show boils down to a marvellous solo turn. (4/22/91) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)



Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Love Lemmings—A satirical comedy revue, written by Joe DiPietro. With a cast of four: Steve Ahern, John Daggett, Helen Greenberg, and Kathryn Rossetter. Directed by Melia Bensussen. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Lusting After Pipino's Wife—A comedy by Sam Henry Kass. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 564-8038.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo portrays seven Hispanic characters in a one-man show, which was seen this spring at the American Place Theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

Mr. Gogol and Mr. Preen—A new comedy by Elaine May, with Zohra Lampert, William H. Macy, and Mike Nussbaum. Directed by Gregory Mosher. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nova Velha Estoria—A work performed by the Brazilian troupe Grupo de Teatro Macunaima. Antunes Filho was the director. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Closes June 23.) (*)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Only the Truth Is Funny—The comedian Rick Reynolds' one-man show. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Pageant—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

Penn & Teller's Refrigerator Tour—The heavenly twain meet again. The new tricks are just as mysterious (and frightening) as the old ones. As for the tricksters, their bogus candor is intact, and they've never been funnier. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

Satan Never Sleeps—A play, with music, by Ronald Wyche and Weldon. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918. Closes June 30.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Sky Woman Falling—A play by Toby Armour. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes June 23.)

The Subject Was Roses—John Mahoney, Dana Ivey, and Patrick Dempsey in a revival of the 1964 play by Frank D. Gilroy. Directed by Jack Hofsiss. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The Substance of Fire—Ron Rifkin gives an impeccable performance as a publisher—a refugee from Nazi Germany—whose difficulties with his grown children are no greater than those with himself. The play, by Jon Robin Baitz, is not flawless, but it is consistently absorbing and very well acted, under the direction of Daniel Sullivan. With Nancy Hume, Patrick Breen, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. (4/1/91) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes June 30.)

The Summer Winds—A new play by Frank Pugliese, with Ashley Crow, Lisa Eichhorn, Timothy Britten Parker, and others. (Naked Angels, 114 W. 17th St. 727-0020. Closes June 15.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Troubadour—Christopher Howatt plays St. Francis of Assisi in a musical by Bert Draesel and John Martin. (Ubu Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 673-3748.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

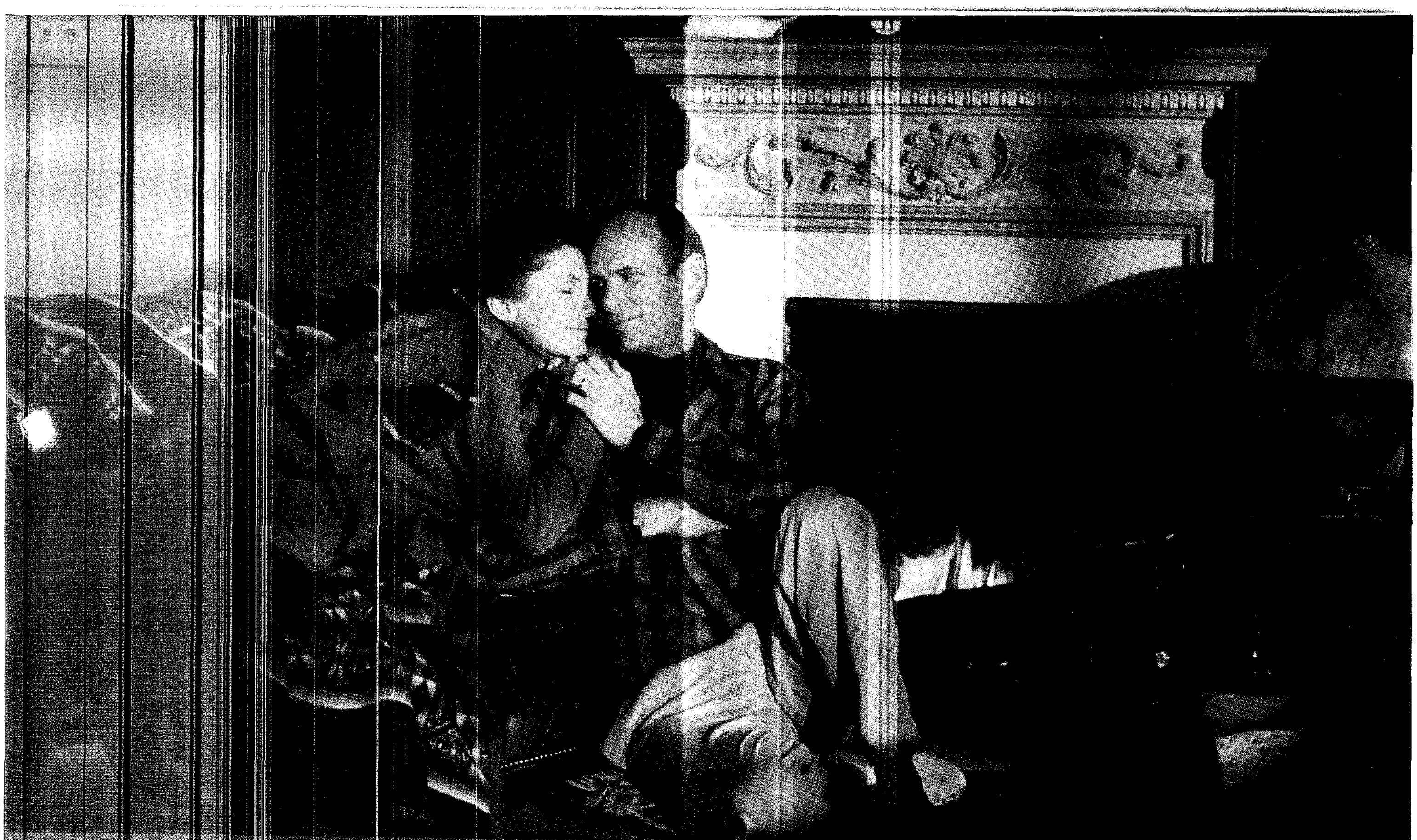
LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one last month. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991½:** A source of continual merriment, this newly revised revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)(*) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about this show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it recreates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of gospel singers have been invited to appear. With Reathel Bean and Kevin Chamberlain. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

THERE is probably no harder job in the dance world than that of keeping a ballet healthy. The skills required are diverse, and the elements of creativity and personal initiative that make most jobs in the arts fulfilling can be deployed only in oblique, even metaphorical ways. You have to know everybody's steps, how those steps are oriented in space, and the physical engineering required to keep each part correctly positioned. You have to understand the relationship of the steps to the music, both in terms of musicianship (where steps and music coincide) and musicality (where they can diverge, according to how the steps look and feel on individual dancers). You have to sense what sort of fantasy fuels the ballet and how to sustain that fantasy's emotional contour without suggesting that such a contour actually exists independently of the choreography. And these are only the intellectual requirements. There are also the interpersonal skills —working with the dancers. You have to have a command of who is available, whom the ballet needs, and whom it can tolerate, and to make use of this knowledge while keeping everyone loyal and focussed on the work itself. You have to know how to help a dancer assimilate the technical facts of the choreography without suffocating a performance. Finally, as an ombudsman for the ballet above all else, you have to know when and how to say to a dancer one of the harshest sentences in the business: "It's time for you to give up this part."

The other day, we dropped in on someone who lives up to most of this job description: Suki Schorer. Ms. Schorer, formerly a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, is currently on the faculty of the School of American Ballet. She was rehearsing two students—Paloma Herrera, age fifteen, and Robert Wersinger, age eighteen—in the leads of Balanchine's "Raymonda Variations." (They performed it a few days later, during the school's annual workshop presentation.) The point of her coaching was



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to make the movement big and surprising. She said things like "Zap!," and "Make everything stop," and "Make yourself stay, then hurry to catch up." At the end, she walked over to Miss Herrera—who is a raven-haired beauty with the expectant expression of a curious child peering over a fence—and said, "Where is the pain?" Miss Herrera looked at her silently. "In the toes?" Ms. Schorer persisted. "Every toe? What are you going to do? Epsom salts? Sneakers? Reeboks?" Ms. Schorer looked at her closely, put an arm around her, and said, "That's it for today."

New York City Ballet—June 11 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Ecstatic Orange," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Episodes." . . . ¶ June 13 at 8: "Jewels." . . . ¶ June 14 at 8: "Mother Goose," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ June 15 at 2: "Jewels." . . . ¶ June 15 at 8: "Mother Goose," "Episodes," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ June 16 at 1: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 16 at 7 and June 18 at 8: "Jewels." . . . ¶ June 19 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Calcium Light Night," "Quiet City," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through June 30.)

American Ballet Theatre—June 10 at 8: "Birthday Offering," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Sinfonietta." . . . ¶ June 11 at 8: "Concerto," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "Birthday Offering," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ June 13-14 at 8, June 15 at 2 and 8, and June 17 at 8: "Don Quixote." . . . ¶ June 18 at 8 and June 19 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. The season continues through June 22.)

Dance Theatre of Harlem—June 14 at 8, June 15 at 2 and 8, and June 16 at 3: "Serenade," "Dialogues" (New York première), and "Dougla." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. Through June 23.)

Elisa King and Dancers—Presenting the première of "Imprints," an evening-length work. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. June 12-15 at 8. For tickets, call 924-0077.)

Compagnie Philippe Genty—Presenting "Driftings," a work with puppetry. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. June 13-15 at 8 and June 16 at 3.) (*)

Alarmel Valli—In a program of Bharata Natyam dance. (Danspace Project/St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 529-2318. June 13-16 at 8:30.) (*)

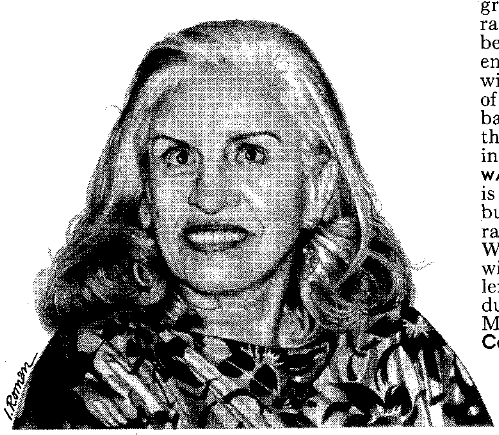
NIGHT LIFE

"I'M a singer first," Sara Zahn said not long ago, "but I'm also a nut case." The young cabaret performer has developed a reputation for one-liners—"I have the Midas touch: everything turns into a muffler"—and for her generally loopy cabaret shows. Last year's "If This Is Love, I'd Rather Be Ice Fishing," for instance, began with "Quiet Please, There's a Lady On Stage," which was accompanied by violins and a flushing toilet. When we saw her at Eighty Eight's (228 West 10th Street), she was winding up a run of her latest offering, "Both Sides of Bernstein."

Our first impression was that Zahn was simply too big for the room. The club is a congenial enough place, but when it's full, as it was during her performance, the aisles disappear, legs and elbows pop up everywhere, and one must sit up straight and take care not to knock over someone else's drink. In such a small, close setting, Zahn's chatty, Bette Midler-ish stage persona at times seemed overpowering—what was intended as camp tilted the slightest bit toward garishness. That said, Zahn did do a fine, nimble job of negotiating Bernstein's tricky melodies, and the program had a nice, straightforward narrative flow to it: "New York, New York" went into "Christopher Street," which went into "Conquering the City"; "My House" dovetailed into "Little White House," which in turn dovetailed into "Take Care of This House." Occasionally, the boisterous numbers involved too much pomp—we winced more than once at the sheer volume of Zahn's voice in the tiny club—and even that easy-pleaser known as "Wrong Note Rag" seemed somewhat shrill. Nevertheless, Zahn's quiet, thoughtful numbers, which were delivered from atop a stool, rang simple and true. Even on what we take to have been something of an off night for her, we saw a good deal of promise in Zahn—both the singer and the nut case.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The Brazilian singer and pop star **MARGARETH MENEZES,** whose cause has lately been taken up by David Byrne, begins an engagement on June 13, with Byrne expected to show up on opening night. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.



Jane Jarvis at Fortune Garden Pavilion

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. The **FRED HERSCH** trio comes in June 11-13; the **STEVE TURRE/ROBIN EUBANKS** quintet performs June 14-15; the **DON BENNETT** trio appears on June 16; and the **RON PETRIDES** quartet is in swing on June 17. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. An exceptional group of musicians appearing under the banner **LIONEL HAMPTON & THE GOLDEN MEN OF JAZZ** hold forth June 11-16. Among them are Hank Jones, Milt Hinton, Grady Tate, and Clark Terry. First set at nine. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because once the first chord is struck the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. Saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN,** pianist **CYRUS CHESTNUT,** and bassist **KENNY DAVIS** work through June 16, with Chico's pop, saxophonist **VON FREEMAN,** joining in June 14-16 (a Father's Day gig). Pianist **MIKE LE DONNE,** bassist **PETER WASHINGTON,** and drummer **BEN RILEY** get under way on June 17. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some nice, wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BOBBY SHORT.** Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't always known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's earns higher marks than most. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. They rearranged the furniture here a while back, so that now a greater number of people look at the stage rather than at a pole. The **DAVID MURRAY** octet begins a stand on June 11. Murray, an influential, free-jazz-leaning tenor saxophonist with a combustive attack, was a co-founder of the World Saxophone Quartet. He led a big band here a few weeks back, an engagement that had many critics and aficionados dusting off their prayer mats. **ARTHUR TAYLOR'S WAILERS** begin a stint on June 18. Taylor, who is a drummer, has a formidable technique, but he uses it to energize his band members rather than to beat them into submission. When a musician takes a solo, Taylor stays with him at every turn, commenting, challenging, embellishing. And, like a good conductor, he can keep tabs on everyone at once. Music after nine.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—One has never known how seriously to take **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE,** and she seems to like it that way. On the one hand, there's the fact that Légère's a trained pianist, cellist, and accordionist, the fact that she has a four-octave vocal range, and the fact that she has written an opera. On the other hand, there's the fact that she appeared in "The Toxic Avenger II," the fact that she is double-jointed and can play piano with one leg hitched up behind her head, and the fact that her opera is about a three-hundred-and-fifty-pound cleaning woman who becomes President. She'll be here every Monday in June. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving, chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays and zydeco on Thursdays. **JOAN OSBORNE,** who will be performing here on June 11, sings a bright, pop-inflected variety of blues. She has a wonderfully raspy voice, and is often seen slinking about the stage in a sleeveless dress, shaking her kinky reddish hair, and lolling her head dreamily back and forth. Her sets include covers ("Son-of-a-Preacher Man," "Me and Bobby McGee") and originals.

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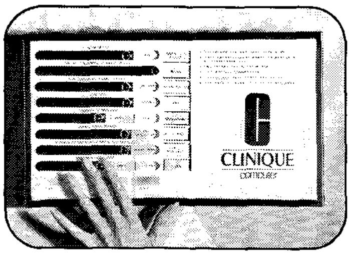

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Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—An Irish pub in the meat-packing district, not too far from the boondocks. In the front room, barbirds study the TV and growl about one thing or another, and in the back room another crowd listens to Irish folk musicians (on Fridays) and native string bands (on Saturdays).

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach look roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The resourceful jazz fusionist **NOEL POINTER**—piano, violin, and vocals—holds sway until June 16, at which time saxophonist **SCOTT HAMILTON** starts up with a quintet. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business people and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which belongs to **JANE JARVIS** June 11-16; **FRANK TATE** is her bassist. The **RICK HARDEMAN** quartet takes off on June 18. Music from six-thirty.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This gorgeous restaurant-and-bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including the **DAVE LEONHARDT** duo June 13-15.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A Texan hangout where good old boys and Southern sorority girls mix with urban cowboys and those just looking. "Roadhouse" is an accurate description: it's a checked-tablecloth, long-necked-Bud, side-of-beef kind of place. Two Confederate singer-songwriters who combine troubadour and Heartland-rock styles perform on June 15: **STEVE EARLE,** a Nashville-based veteran, and **WILL T. MASSEY,** a Texas-bred newcomer who just released his big-label début. A tribute to Doc Pomus occurs on June 17, with guest artists including rockabilly singer **MARSHALL CRENSHAW.** The blistering rock-blues-boogie guitarist **DANNY GATTON** appears on June 18, and **NRBQ** begins a two-nighter on June 19. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. **LUTHER (GUITAR JR.) JOHNSON** performs on June 13. Sets from nine-fifteen, except on Sundays, when shows begin at eight.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—The current front-runner on the alternative-music scene. **THROWING MUSES,** who will be playing here June 13, seem to have hit a wall career-wise—there's been disappointingly little acclaim for their tense, moody records—but the band tours more or less constantly and never fails to put on a hypnotic show. **FISHBONE** comes in on June 14, and the much-heralded **DREAD ZEPPELIN**—a band fronted by an Elvis impersonator who sings reggae-ized Led Zeppelin covers—appears with **MOJO NIXON** on June 15.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—A small-pond club for big-fish bands. There's not much here to look at: it's a back-room affair with a dingy stage and a baby grand someone apparently tried to cover with papier-mâché. Still, the bookers know their college-radio playlists. **TINY LIGHTS,** who perform on June 14, play an odd mixture of R. & B. and art music. One minute you'd swear they were disciples of Big Brother & the Holding Company, but then, just when you're headed for the dance floor, they'll break into whale sounds. The **SKELETONS** and the **A-BONES** share the bill on June 15. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

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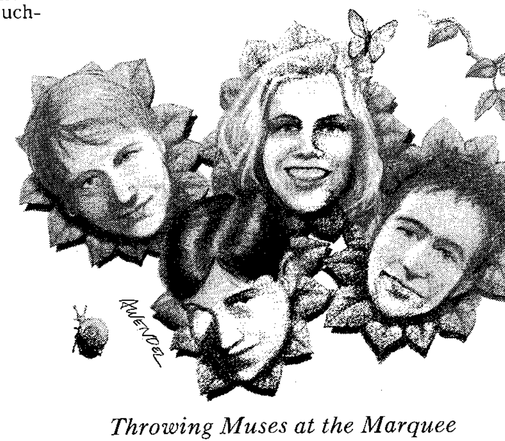
WHITTLER

There's a four-thousand-pound praying mantis in Riverside Park, at 84th Street, its head tipped to one side and its front legs brought up to its head in concentration. The object, which is the work of the sculptor Robert Ressler, is made of wood and steel—wood from an ash tree a hundred yards to the mantis's southeast, which was struck by lightning last summer and is now just a stump. Ressler likes to make art from wood (New York City parks wood, when he can get it) that is donated either by the parks department or by private tree-cutters. Ressler's studio itself is in a city park—a patch of field in Flushing Meadows' Corona Park, which he has strewn with tree trunks and sawdust. His other creations include twenty-foot-high crutches at 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue; what looks like a group of trees dancing around a maypole at the foot of the Tweed Courthouse; and a group of enigmatic shapes—including a sphere, a kind of slingshot, and a butcher block in the process of being cleaved—in Corona Park. He's also at work on a set of leaf-shaped benches for Prospect Park.

Ressler says he likes having his work in the parks. He says he's seen people string a net between two of the pieces in the Corona Park sculpture and play volleyball, and others climbing on the back of the mantis (kids during the day, adults after dark). In fact, after he finds homes for the enigmatic shapes and the dancing trees, which will come down later this summer (his park pieces will be removed by winter), he wants to build a playground that's both fun and interesting to look at. "You can't possess the stuff," he says about public art. "Once you start possessing the stuff, you're making stuff for an inside space and hoarding it. You really have to put it out there."



Throwing Muses at the Marquee

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A great, pricey cabaret in the sky. **BETTY BUCKLEY** starts up on June 11. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS** time-travel to the nineteen-thirties every Tuesday at eight-thirty; wearing natty tuxedos and seated behind felt-bannered music stands, they run through original arrangements by the likes of Hoagy Carmichael and Fletcher Henderson. Show times vary on other nights.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (68[illegible]-6500)—A Western theme bar, attached to a Mexican restaurant. You get walls designed to simulate a log cabin; a buffalo head that blows smoke through its nostrils; a horse trailer that's been converted into a bar; peanuts for eating and, occasionally, throwing. But wait, there's more: a TV that plays tapes of rodeos; New Mexico memorabilia; and live music nightly: country, blues, folk, rock, hillbilly. Shows from ten-thirty.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to score. Last fall, the Tea Room's small, red-gold-and-green cabaret reopened with a series of performances. **BILLY STRITCH,** who sang and played piano for the recently dissolved Houston trio Montgomery, Plant, and Stritch, is on hand on June 16, with his own trio. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Spo-dee-o-dee, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A night club in a part of Chelsea the real-estate agents don't show you. It's a modest-sized space with a dance floor, a stage (there's live music seven nights a week), and pell-mell décor: Victorian-style chandeliers, movie-theatre drapes, murals of Cotton Club-era dancers. At peak hours (late), you'll get an eyeful of waves, perms, teased and sprayed locks, lip gloss, and designer-outlet new-wave apparel.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** leads a trio June 11-16. Tyner puts on extraordinary shows. His playing, which alternates seamlessly from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated, is only a part of the package. Tyner's partners—bassist **AVERY SHARPE** and drummer **AARON SCOTT**—are with him every step of the way. The highlight of an appearance here not long ago, in fact, was Sharpe's solo on "Monk's Dream." The **JOHN ABERCROMBIE / RANDY BRECKER** quartet begins a week-long gig on June 18. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and, sometimes, a house photographer. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN'S** quintet, featuring **JAMES CLAY,** is in charge June 11-16; the **BUSTER WILLIAMS** quintet begins work on June 18. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. Pianist **JOHN BUNCH,** seven-string guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** are on the premises through June 15; pianist **PETE MALINVERNI** and bassist **PETER WASHINGTON** commence on June 17. Music from eight.

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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

IT wasn't long ago that pulse-takers like *Details* and *Paper* devoted entire issues to the transformation of the East Village into our Saint-Germain. And, true, on a recent Sunday, round midnight, several outdoor cafés in the vicinity of Tompkins Square Park were bustling. But the air was also vibrating with an uneasy, determined obliviousness to the everything-that's-now-wrong-with-New York crowd that nightly convenes along the joyless rialto that is Avenue A. Walking along the avenue from 6th Street to 10th, we were panhandled by eleven people, ten of them women under twenty-five. A man propped against a tower of trash raised his head far enough to hurl sexual epithets at every person entering the Pyramid Club. In front of a bar near St. Marks Place, a sextet in stained black gathered near three Honda Civic-size Harleys, one of which was experiencing technical difficulties. "My mother says never drive around without at least a quarter of a tank," one of the group's women said in jest. Her date spat beer in her face, then asked if anyone else had a five he could bum for some gas.

We crossed the avenue and took a moonlight stroll through the park. There were enough wheelchairs around to fill a V.A. hospital ward. A young man with a beer-endorsing T-shirt was making a speech to a small crowd and one cop car about the dispensability of "wannabes," referring not to Madonna followers during her "Like a Virgin" phase but to those who don't live in the park yet want to help. "You're not with us if you're not us," he proclaimed, and promptly lost half his audience to King Tut's Wah Wah Hut and other points south. Back on Avenue A, one of two guys sprawled over the front seat of a red Mazda 626 with Connecticut plates muttered, "This stinks." He wasn't referring to the fetid night air. "You said this place was cool to hang out," he said to his buddy. Just then a lone Nordic goddess raced by on roller blades. "Now, that's cool. Follow her," the disgruntled guy commanded. Neither he nor his friend noticed a guy who'd fallen asleep across the Mazda's trunk until the car's ignition was started. "Man, this is no fun," the guy moaned.

At nine-thirty the next morning, the city closed the park "for renovation," to do more, one hopes, than rectify the disappointment of guests from neighboring states. But the fence goes around only Tompkins Square. How do you renovate a neighborhood?

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—
PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"Uccelli, the Drugs of Love"—A tragedy, with puppets, by Roman Paska. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. June 12-15 at 8.) (*)

La Fura dels Baus—A performance group from Barcelona. (Kaufman-Astoria Studios, 34-12 36th St., Astoria. June 12-15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 255-5793.) (*)

"Oh Darn!"—A theatre work about the traumas of childhood; with Maureen Angelos and Dominique Dibbell. (WOW Café, 59 E. 4th St. 460-8067. June 13-15 at 8. Through June 22.)

Dancenoise—The dynamic duo, in a new performance piece. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 869-3530. June 12-14 and June 16 at 8, and June 15 at 8 and 10:30.)

David Marquis—Presenting "Bolinas . . . Where the Cows Kiss Each Other Goodnite," a site-specific monologue. (Wall St. in front of Federal Hall, June 13-14 at 8. Admission by contribution. Through June 28.)

"The Bay of Naples"—A work presented by the French company Théâtre 95. In French. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. June 13-16 at 8.)

ART

THE landscapes of Roberto Burle Marx should prove a revelation to anyone who believes that great gardens must descend directly from either the Romantic English or the classical French. Burle Marx, a Brazilian who works mainly in his own country, honors his early debt to Gertrude Jekyll, but the waving patterns of black, white, and red mosaic tiles and the irregularly banked trees he set along Rio's Copacabana Beach have very little to do with boxwood mazes and secret gardens. Alexander Calder might be a more appropriate comparison, for Burle Marx is an uncompromisingly modern gardener who sculpts and paints with nature in broad, mid-century rhythms and bold strokes. If his emphasis on rubber plants sometimes harks back to all those progressive corporate lobbies of the fifties, making the word "ecumenical" ring in your ears, his most panoramic vistas still have the big, beautiful look of Tomorrow. MOMA's current show (through August 13) of drawings and architectonic models by Burle Marx—big columns, for instance, made of the bromeliads that this lifelong tropical-plant collector adores—is both pleasurably edifying and frustratingly small. Viewers are therefore strongly urged to see it, and also to browse at length in the museum's bookstore to get a fuller picture of Burle Marx's brilliant compositions of water, flowers, plants, stone sculptures, and earth.

We were lucky enough to catch a Roberto Burle Marx slide lecture at the museum. Burle Marx is eighty-one, has a booming voice and a wacky accent in English, and is as animated as an old-school Viennese maestro, but he is utterly unstuffy in his approach. He told us many things about himself: that he first learned to love flowers in his mother's rose garden, for instance, and that he is a millionaire in the currency of plants. He told us that his relationship to trees and plants and flowers is very intimate—he calls them "individuals"—and that he knows exactly how each "individual" grows. "I *hate* formulas," he said, and, quoting Picasso, he announced that it was "much better to copy other people than to copy oneself." If the rapt faces that filled the auditorium were any indication, he also has bona-fide groupies, aged from about eighteen on. A revivalist spirit filled the air. Whenever Burle Marx blustered, searching for a name or date, the audience, in almost perfect unison, supplied the missing information to egg him on.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum Mile Festival—The thirteenth annual open house takes place June 11, from six to nine in the evening. Fifth Avenue between 82nd and 104th Streets is accessible to pedestrians and street performers only, and seven of the museums along the way are free of charge.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A hundred and fifty sculptures, drawings, and decorative objects by Paul Manship (1885-1966). . . . ¶ "Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism," a show of works from the Annenberg Collection. Included are Cézanne's "Mont Sainte-Victoire" and van Gogh's "La Berceuse (Woman Rocking a Cradle)." . . . ¶ "The Sculpture of Indonesia" includes more than a hundred and thirty-five bronzes, life-size stone sculptures, and ceremonial objects dating from the eighth century to the fifteenth. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ Illuminated pages and decorative designs from Islamic books produced in Iran, Turkey, and India from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. Through Aug. 18. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Ninety-five paintings, collages, and gouaches by Ad Reinhardt (1913-67). . . . ¶ "Seven Master Printmakers: Innovations in the Eighties." A respectable yet somewhat anachronistic exhibition, loaded with nostalgia for the days when an artistic canon was firmly in place. It is the curator's contention that all the artists in the show, who rose to prominence in the sixties, continued to be innovators in the eighties. Of all the artists shown, Jasper Johns has remained the most engaged in the process of printmaking. Be they etchings, lithographs, or monotypes, Johns' works are exquisite records of gesture. The selection of his prints here forms a thoughtful counterpoint to the retrospective of his drawings mounted recently at the Whitney. As for David Hockney and Jim Dine, it is worth noting that they produced little of historical interest in the eighties, and nowhere is this more evident than in their prints. There is a lot of experimentation in Frank Stella's prints from the decade, but of a sort that perhaps only a technician could love. James Rosenquist entered some risky territory with his eighties prints, and the payoff was great, at times perhaps even greater than in his paintings. Roy Lichtenstein is an undeniable master of the medium, but the selection here is unsatisfying. Robert Rauschenberg is a master, too, and shown here are the kinds of collaged images he does best, but their technique is virtually indistinguishable from what he was doing twenty-five years ago. All this leads us to the question, What *were* the innovations of the eighties? Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ Designs for gardens and parks by the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ An installation by Kyoko Kumai, a Japanese fibre artist. Through June 18. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early 1992.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial is winding down. Work by fifties and sixties stars is on the second floor, through June 16; work by seventies and eighties debs is on the third floor, through June 30; and work by late-eighties and nineties kids is on the fourth floor, through June 23. The "AIDS Timeline," by Group Material, is in the lobby, through June 23. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Quattrocento: Early Italian Panel Paintings." Starts June 14. . . . ¶ Leon Golub's first three-dimensional installation, titled "World-Wide." Through June 16. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm spathes, raffia, and bamboo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Story of a Painting: A Korean Buddhist Treasure from the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation." This scholar's dream show takes a single work of art and casts about in several different historical directions at once. Although the painting under examination, known as the Burke Triad, is faded and hardly a crowd pleaser, it's an important work in the history of Korean art, a rapidly expanding field. When the Japanese invaded Korea in 1592, they destroyed or pillaged pretty much all of the local culture, and the Burke Triad, which depicts the Buddha and two attendant bodhisattvas, is a rare example of pre-invasion Buddhist art. The show also provides a mini-history of the triad form, a view of Korean Buddhist monastic life, and a sampling of later Korean painting, much of which has a marvellous flattened, Netherlandish space. It's a tightly packed display, fascinating and at times confusing. On the whole it offers a somewhat loopy view, mostly due to the breadth of the subjects and the smallness of the exhibition. But there are several rich works to savor. Through July 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"The Nearest Edge of the World," an exhibition of works in several mediums by nine contemporary artists from Cuba. Through Aug. 4. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"From Pontormo to Seurat," a show of sixty-one drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago, including works by Gainsborough, Géricault, Redon, Delacroix, and Degas. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Painting a Place in America" gathers the work of fifty Jewish-American painters and sculptors working in New York between 1900 and 1945. Among the artists represented are Adolph Gottlieb, Louise Nevelson, Chaim Gross, Mark Rothko, and Max Weber. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—The "Nuyorican" experience is alive in the work of Pepón Osorio, who moved to New York from Puerto Rico in 1975. At the entrance to this retrospective of his work is a fancy, fake-Venetian chandelier further ornamented by a trove of tacky tchotchkes, ranging from dominoes and water pistols to plastic ferns and tiny, brittle street-stand dolls. Other lightly nostalgic and comic charmers—some the results of performance collaborations with Merián Soto, the artist's choreographer wife—include "La Cama," a room-size work, with bed and coverlet, dedicated to the artist's nanny, and "Broken Hearts," a set piece, featuring luggage, about the dashed dreams of immigrants from the south. "The Wake," a life-size replica of a funeral parlor full of coffins and body bags, is a harrowing depiction of AIDS, both solemn and almost grotesquely disorienting in a museum setting. Through Aug. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" presents more than a hundred art works in various mediums. The works are divided into five categories: "Traditional," "New Functional," "Urban," "International," and "Extinct." The Center for African Art has organized the exhibition, which runs simultaneously in its galleries, at 54 E. 68th St. (Open daily, except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.) Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In a show called "Embodying Faith," five contemporary artists tackle the theme of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in Christianity. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In the museum's Broadway windows is an installation by the Catalan artist Perejaume, titled "Pintura i Representació," that consists of two visitor-accessible rows of theatre seats. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ "Eclipse of the Earth," an installation by Kazuo Katase. Through Aug. 18. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"The Taste of Andrew Carnegie." The Scottish-born steel industrialist seemed to understand the difference between taste and historical judgment. His taste tended toward brooding Victoriana—sentimental peasant scenes and uninspiringly picturesque landscapes—but when it came to his legacy he trusted the experts and displayed a faith in public institutions that was unparalleled. By the time he died, in 1919, he had given away ninety per cent of his fortune to fund universities, concert halls (including New York's Carnegie), Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute, and more than twenty-five hundred libraries. This small show includes some of Carnegie's mediocre personal collection as well as selections from a fine print collection, including examples by Dürer and Goltzius, from the Carnegie Institute. The most enjoyable part of this exhibition is the memorabilia, such as a menu from a dinner in Carnegie's honor that describes the "Bieffe" course as "Wut's Good's all Scotch, all that isn't ain't." Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Justice Rendered" is a show of forty documents and art works related to the three-hundred-year history of the New York Supreme Court. Through July 7. . . . ¶ Sixty drawings, photographs, and prints of New York structures built at the turn of the century by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. Through Aug. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. Through Aug. 24. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Sixty-three prints by Reginald Marsh (1898-1954), depicting New York scenes from the twenties and thirties. Through June 29. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ A display of recently acquired rare books and manuscripts, including Joseph Conrad's manuscript for "The Secret Sharer" and Washington Irving's manuscript for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." (Berg Collection. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Mozart's World" presents more than a hundred prints by artists of the day, first editions and manuscripts ("Don Giovanni" and "Le Nozze de Figaro," among others), and elaborate period costumes. There are also related exhibits in the music, dance, and theatre departments of the library. Through Aug. 31. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays and Fridays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"Interrelations and Migration: Contemporary Sculpture from Germany" is an exhibition of four artists—Erwin Heerich, Norbert Kricke, Abraham David Christian, and Katsuhito Nishikawa—who have worked in Düsseldorf. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of works by Romare Bearden (1912-88), which includes a hundred and forty-one oils, collages, and watercolors. Through Aug. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brice Marden—A midsize show of new drawings and etchings by our great aesthete abstractionist. The paintings have a sonorous ceremonial rhythm, while the drawings suggest jitterbugs and dervish whirls—rigorous, mind-altering dances. Through June 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Robert Motherwell—An interestingly offbeat show of paintings and drawings, large and small—made between 1958 and the present—that have been hung atelier-style in order to evoke the artist's studio, in Connecticut. It is difficult to guess the dates of Motherwell's works just by looking. Two new paintings, craggily grand and in his most characteristic blacks and browns, seem almost exactly like vintage Motherwells; they are, perhaps, a little tighter and sharper around the edges. Through June 28. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

Kenneth Noland—A show of new paintings that is a mixed bag. Each work consists of several loosely connected, curved-edge canvases, flatly painted in various monochromes and edged in Plexiglas of contrasting colors. Some are overstudied and depressed, but others are quite engaging, like lyrical versions of Ellsworth Kellys, and have an unexpected defiance. Through June 29. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**MARCEL BROODTHAERS,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 3); **FRITZ BULTMAN,** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St., and Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through June 15); **SAM FRANCIS,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **ELLIOTT GREEN,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 3); **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21); **FRITZ SCHOLDER,** Alexander, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21); **SALLY SCUFFLE,** Mark Milliken, 1200 Madison Ave., at 87th St. (open Mondays, through June 29).

Photographer James Casebere

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Group Show—Recent works by three people who are not, in common parlance, "uptown artists." "Trade Winds," by Maura Sheehan, is an enticingly summery piece that includes jalousies sporting scenic painting, an electric fan decked out in boating flags, piles of white and brown sugar connoting the North and the South, and a map on which Latin America looms especially large. Kim Jones' installation is recognizable at once by its clusters of sticks suggesting bursts of shrapnel and by its all-over device of splattered mud—a bit as if Richard Long had gone to combat instead of on country walks. And Brett De Palma deploys an arsenal of styles ranging from Cubism to psychedelia; his paintings, for all their domestication, are really wild at heart—a lot wilder, in fact, than Fauve art. Through June 29. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**HANNO AHRENS** and **JAMES BARSNESS,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **ENRICO BAJ,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 14); **DANIEL BARRETT,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 22); **VALENTINA DU BASKY** and **LYNNE FREHM,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 29); **JEDD GARET,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21); **MIRALDA,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through July 3); **GRÉGOIRE MÜLLER,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 12); **ANNE TRUITT,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **MANOLO VALDES,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 21).

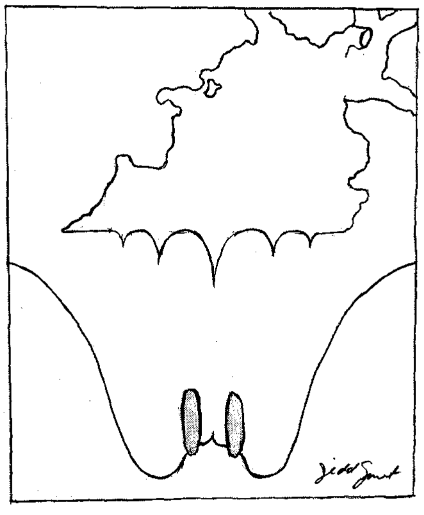
GALLERIES—SoHo

Gregory Crane—Bentonesque regionalism lives in these magical landscape paintings depicting paths lined with giant thistles. The works contain only occasional suggestions of human life, an aspect that enhances their mystery. Through June 15. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

ART–Cont'd

Sherrie Levine—For some time now, Levine has been taking on the conceptual giant of the twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp. She appropriates that master appropriator's forms, and neutralizes and reforms them through feminist discourse. The first room in this intelligent, dramatic show has been transformed into an artifactual display of a rarefied men's club, with four identical billiard tables lifted from a painting by Man Ray. The second room contains more specifically Duchampian works: a series of highly polished, identical bronze urinals and a group of six monochrome oil paintings, each in a different Yves Klein color, called "Meltdowns." Through June 29. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Fernando Melani (1907-85)—Although he was inspired by Mondrian and can be seen as a precursor of minimalism and Arte Povera, the eccentric Melani considered his work the embodiment of theoretical physics and did not want it to be limited by the label "art." He therefore rarely exhibited, and remains one of Italy's best-kept creative secrets, barely known outside his native Pistoia. An *haut bourgeois* whose father gambled away the family fortune, Melani donned a worker's uniform years before Beuys did. This is a glorious exhibition, the first major one outside Pistoia, and it presents remarkably consistent work spanning the last four decades of the artist's life. Mondrian's inspiration is everywhere: from a finely balanced painted construction from 1959, titled "Venus and Mondrian," to the multipanel "Project for a Global Reading," from 1976, which consists of a wall of monochrome panels in innumerable sizes and colors. There are some fine, unassuming paintings on the backs of crates, collages of hammered brass, monumental sculptures made of bicycle parts (including "The Rape of Proserpina"), and numerous small, Gaboesque assemblages made of bent and curled wires. Through June 29. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)



Self-portrait by Jedd Garet

Timur Novikov—Unlike much of the Soviet art that has reached New York, Novikov's narrative paintings are sweet and the product of a light touch. All the works in this show consist of two contrasting pieces of fabric sewn together along horizon lines of various sorts; small painted elements added to the fabric set the narratives in motion. Through June 29. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Peter Schuyff—Three tall, skinny, essentially abstract paintings of what look like upholstery details. The works are so skillfully executed—they show a sophisticated sense of color and light and have some fine brushwork—and are so dramatically installed that one can easily be seduced into thinking that there's something more than great skill behind them. They are, in fact, difficult to dismiss, and are best appreciated as joyful decorative painting. Through June 29. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

Claude Simard—This artist almost succeeds in creating a haunting show with poetic resonance. But several cheap, theatrical tricks—like a group of life-size sculptures of men in purple shrouds on wall-mounted shelves, and a fake escape hatch attached to the ceiling—push the exhibit into the realm of the obvious and pretentious. Through July 3. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

Rudolf Stingel—For this exhibition, the artist, who is primarily known for monochrome paintings made according to a standard recipe, has covered the floor with a plush orange wall-to-wall carpet. The work is very late seventies in spirit, harking back to a period when there was no star system to speak of and art was valued more for the ideas it examined and the assumptions it challenged than for its position within the hierarchy of the market. Both irony and optimism are evident here. Through June 15. (Newburg, 580 Broadway.)

Robert Therrien—A group of varied and usually compelling sculptures that explore the edge between abstraction and representation. Through June 22. (65 Thompson Street Gallery. Closed Saturdays.)

Franz West and Mathis Esterhazy—A strange, still, and beautiful show of steel implements, welded and forged, of somewhat arcane function. The title of the group, "Pis Aller," refers to the centuries-old corner braces that were used in Europe to prevent men from urinating in public places. (Some still exist.) There are two of these devices here, and two each of the show's other objects: sieves, coin boxes, and hurdles, for example. All are presented on platforms, to be scrutinized as sculptures. The use of the double image—implying both mate and collaborator—gives a psychological complexion to the show. Through June 28. (Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

"The Library"—A show, curated by Douglas Blau, of paintings, that depict a space into which the artist, or the viewer, can escape. David Deutsch's imaginary refuge, a private picture gallery that goes by the rather immodest title "Blaze of the Universe," is a heroic domed space covered with a collection of the artist's own paintings. Not all the works here are compelling—Michele Zalopany's piece, for instance, portrays a gated garden of the sort you might find in a Chanel commercial—but many of them are, particularly a large canvas rubbing by Matt Mullican of a generator room of early industrial vintage. The most magnetic work is a small, dark canvas by Troy Brauntuch that depicts a helmeted soldier in the foreground and some aged vehicles, a steam engine, and men in coats deep in a background haze illuminated by muffled sparks of light. The soldier, in a play on Velázquez's self-portrait in "Las Meniñas" and all the later self-portraits it brings to mind, seems to be peering through his binoculars at the show's viewers—a "library" of sorts. Through June 29. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

Short List—**KELYNN Z. ALDER,** Australia Gallery, 98 Greene St. (through June 29); **GARY BROTMEYER,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through June 29); **JAIME DAVIDOVICH,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through July 13); **NANCY DAVIDSON** and **STEVEN DICILLO,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through July 10); **CHARLES GAINES,** Weber, 142 Greene St., and Castelli, 578 Broadway (through June 22); **JOHN GUNDELFINGER,** Perlow, 560 Broadway (through June 26); **PAUL ÉTIENNE LINCOLN,** Burgin, 130 Prince St. (through June 29); **GIAN MARCO MONTESANO,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through June 28); **DAVID NYZIO** and **VINCENT SHINE,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (through June 15); **RICHARD TOBIAS,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through July 12); **GILBERTO ZORIO,** SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through July 27).

OTHER GALLERIES

Shigeko Kubota—A retrospective of video sculptures and concrete poems. The atmosphere pervading the two floors here—one lit low, the other brightly—suggests a metaphysical World's Fair. Among the many highlights are "Adam and Eve"—an astral pair revolving at different speeds, with wood limbs and monitor guts—and the blue-mirrored "Video Byobu III (Birds)," in which psychedelic avian patterns flicker across sixteen monitors. Through Sept. 15. (Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 12 to 4; Saturdays and Sundays, 12 to 6.)

Short List—**SETON SMITH,** Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through June 29); **FRED TOMASELLI,** Randy Alexander, 270 Lafayette St. (through June 15).

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE fortune reads "ALL WILL GO WELL WITH YOUR FUTURE." It's emblazoned in big lilac letters on a faint-green wall at Metro Pictures (150 Greene Street), positioned so that passersby can read it easily. The prediction is part of a show by Louise Lawler, titled "For Sale," that concentrates on a subject much discussed of late: art and auctions. Lawler's photo works here are mostly images shot at Sotheby's or Christie's. The exhibition includes photographs of art works wrapped in plastic; a detail of Jasper Johns' painting "Two Flags" (1973), with its Sotheby's auction card and price estimate; and a photograph of a corner of a Miró, in which you can see both the artist's signature and a red Sotheby's sticker pasted on the picture's gold frame. When these pieces were begun, the art market was in a bullish mood; since the opposite has been true lately, the works have already accumulated a new layer of meaning.

We're torn about Lawler's art about art. After a while, there's something awfully easy about the finger-wagging that's buried in there with her contextualizations, her observations, and her deceptions. But there's also a deliciously Jamesian quality about her attention to, and respect for, details. And the work has wit.

James Casebere—An exhibition of resonant new photographs of the artist's own architectural sculptures, displayed both in large black-and-white prints and on huge light boxes. Casebere has worked in this vein before, with highly original results; his combination of sculpture and photography has none of the didacticism one often finds in multimedia art. The work displays a graceful integration of vocabularies—a delicate juggling of the concrete and the imagined. Although the models themselves are all Casebere's conceptions, they are informed by architectural history; the combination of reality, imagination, and "voice" makes for imagery that has a postmodern poetic sense. Through July 6. (Klein, 594 Broadway. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

"Mean Streets"—A small show of American street photography since the nineteen-forties. There are well-known works that exemplify the genre—images by Lisette Model, Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand, and Walker Evans—but there are also wonderful shots by lesser-known photographers. All of the pictures have a cinematic quality, and a gritty dynamic. Leon Levenstein's 1969 photograph of a man on Fifth Avenue is a powerful, growly portrait, and Todd Webb's long horizontal panel capturing a block on Sixth Avenue in 1948 is a fantastic display of street signs and street action. Through July 16. (Museum of Modern Art.)

Short List—**JOHN FLATTAU,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through June 29); **SALLY GALL,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through June 15); **TEUN HOCKS,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through June 29); **CRAIGIE HORSFIELD,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through June 21); **PAUL ICKOVIC** and **BRIAN WEIL,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; through July 21); **KOICHIRO KURITA,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through June 29); **LAURIE LAMBRECHT,** Plumb, 81 Greene St. (through July 25); **LOUISE LAWLER,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through June 22); **OLIVIA PARKER,** Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through June 29); **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through June 11); **THOMAS TULIS,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through June 28); **JOEL-PETER WITKIN,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 29).

MUSIC

WE have been reading in the *Times* about music critics, tenors, and letter writers—specifically about the mail John Rockwell has been getting since he wrote a column about Luciano Pavarotti and the role of Otello. In that column, he expressed enthusiasm for the idea of singers stretching themselves for challenging roles even if their voices might not possess the power traditionally associated with those roles. In a second column, he divulged that some of his correspondents had formed a strikingly uncomplimentary estimation of his perspicacity as a listener, and offered the interesting speculation that if Mr. Pavarotti had lived seventy-five years ago his faults would have been forgotten by now and his virtues—preserved on primitive recordings—would be used, presumably by these same correspondents, as a stick with which to beat modern singers and their apologists.

All this comes back to mind as we look over concert listings for the coming weeks, because the one event that makes us immediately think, "Let's go"—all the tackiness that surrounds superstar personal appearances notwithstanding—is Mr. Pavarotti with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra performing Verdi on the Great Lawn of Central Park, on June 11. They will be doing chestnuts from "Luisa Miller," "Rigoletto," "Traviata," "Macbeth," and the Requiem, along with the rarely heard "Hymn of the Nations." (The last work has a reputation as a meritless potboiler in Verdi's output, but when we heard the piece stirringly sung by Carlo Bergonzi in Brooklyn a few years back, we found much of it worthwhile.) The Met's chorus will be there, too, for the "Hymn" and favorites from "Macbeth" and "Nabucco."

There are serious questions behind Mr. Rockwell's musings—just what connection is there between the build-up of recorded musical treasures and the apparently stalled accumulation of treasured musical scores, for instance? But in the narrow question of Mr. Pavarotti's standing we think the answers are much easier. One reason he is so popular is that he sounds a lot more like those tenors of seventy-five years ago than do most of his colleagues. That is also why he is in demand for parts that may not be just right for him. If he really had lived seventy-five years ago—if he had been competing on the world's stages in the years surrounding the First World War—we think he'd have held his own nicely. He probably would have been invited to make a series of records that would be rated as high by cognoscenti in 1991 as are those of Antonio Cortis or Giovanni Zenatello or even Giuseppe Anselmi, and he would have had offers from every opera house in the world—but probably not for "Otello."

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 874-2424 and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera, Concert Productions—**central park's great lawn:** June 11 at 8:30 (rain date, June 13 at 6), an all-Verdi concert, conducted by James Levine, featuring tenor Luciano Pavarotti. In addition to excerpts from "Luisa Miller," "Macbeth," "La Traviata," "Rigoletto," "Nabucco," and the Requiem, the concert will feature a performance of the composer's "Hymn of the Nations." Commissioned for London's International Exhibition of 1862, the "Hymn" comprises not only declamations in which the tenor extols the contributions of various countries to the cause of world brotherhood but also the national anthems of Italy, France, and England, sometimes superimposed over one another in jolly counterpoint. The work is not often performed, though Toscanini did put it to use in the soundtrack for a 1943 propaganda film for the U.S. Office of War Information; at the end of this version (which survives as an independent recording), the conductor reflected the political exigencies of his own time by tacking on "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Internationale" (which was then the official anthem of Russia). . . . ¶ June 12 at 8 (rain date, June 13 at 6), "Don Giovanni," with Marilyn Mims, Patricia Schuman, Kaaren Erickson, Donald Kaasch, Thomas Hampson, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Christian Badea. . . . ¶ June 18 at 8 (rain date, June 20 at 6), "Un Ballo in Maschera," with Leona Mitchell, Erie Mills, Alexandrina Milcheva, Taro Ichihara, and Louis Quilico; Michelangelo Veltri. . . . **cunningham park, queens:** June 15 at 8 (rain date, June 16 at 8), "Un Ballo in Maschera," with Leona Mitchell, Erie Mills, Alexandrina Milcheva, Taro Ichihara, and Louis Quilico; Michelangelo Veltri. . . . **prospect park, brooklyn:** June 19 at 8 (rain date, June 20 at 8), "Don Giovanni," with Marilyn Mims, Patricia Schuman, Myra Merritt, Michael Forest, Richard Cowan, and James Courtney; Christian Badea. (No tickets necessary.)

Center for Contemporary Opera—Presenting a staged production of Britten's "The Burning Fiery Furnace." Soloists include tenor Steven Tharp and baritone Michael Dash. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. June 18-20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 308-6728.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, André Previn conducting the final performances of the season. June 11 at 7:30: Berlioz's overture "Le Corsaire," Brahms' Symphony No. 4, and Dutilleux's Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ June 12-13 and June 15 at 8, and June 14 at 11 A.M.: Brahms' "Academic Festival Overture" and Mozart's Symphony No. 39, as well as Mr. Previn's own Piano Concerto, with André Watts as soloist.

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts seven concertos by Vivaldi, with soloists Ani Kavafian (violin), Lawrence Dutton (viola), Carter Brey (cello), and Kenneth Cooper (harpsichord). (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. June 12 at 8.)

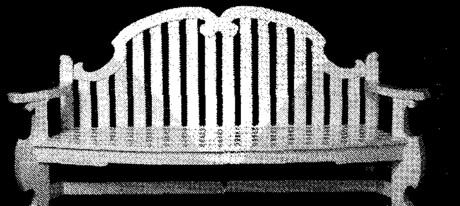
Florilegium Chamber Choir—Jo Ann Rice directs the première of Elie Siegmeister's "Scenes of the Big Town" and selections from his cycle "Madam to You," as well as works by Marc Blitzstein, including his "This Is the Garden (A Cantata of New York)." The Hudson Valley Singers assist in Orlando Gibbons' "Cryes of London" and other pieces. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 12 at 8.)

Stonewall Chorale—Nancy Vang directs the choir and the Greenwich Village Orchestra in works by Bernstein (his "Chichester Psalms"), Britten, Virgil Thomson, and Jean Berger. A highlight of the program promises to be Irving Fine's "The Choral New Yorker." The cycle's poetic texts (by Peggy Bacon, Jake Falstaff, Isabelle McMeekin, and David McCord) appeared in the pages of *The New Yorker* between 1927 and 1933. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. June 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

Contemporary Music Ensemble of RAI-Turin—Giampiero Taverna conducts two separate programs of new music from Italy, including works by Berio, Goffredo Petrassi, and Luigi

LUTYENS



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André Previn, with the New York Philharmonic

Dallapiccola. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 10-11 at 8:30.) (*)

Mordecai Shehori—Pianist, performing a diverse program that explores the musical connections between works by Beethoven (his Sonata, Op. 2, No. 2), Brahms (his Three Intermezzos, Op. 117), Mozart (his B-Minor Adagio and D-Major Rondo), Liszt (the "Rhapsodie Espagnole," as well as his keyboard transcriptions of six songs by Chopin), and others. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. June 12 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting chamber music by Ravel and Mozart (including the latter's Clarinet Quintet). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. June 13-14 at 7:30 and June 16 at 4.)

Accademia del Santo Spirito—A commedia-dell'arte troupe of singers, actors, and dancers presents Adriano Banchieri's 1598 madrigal comedy, "La Pazzia Senile," in English. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 13 at 8:30.) (*)

Music for a While—Guillaume de Machaut and Duke Ellington are not names that seem very likely candidates to appear in the same sentence, let alone on the same concert program. Yet the courtly poet-musician of fourteenth-century France and the American inventor of the twentieth-century "big band" do share *some* common ground (though, admittedly, the former labored in the employ of the nobility, while the latter was himself—well—a Duke). Both worked within a largely improvisatory tradition, both wrote pieces on order for specific uses, both pushed the musical language of their time in strikingly new directions. And both wrote lots of love songs, which are here offered by an augmented version of an early-music group that has spent the last twenty years as a resident ensemble at Sarah Lawrence College. (West End Gate, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. June 14 at 9. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Young Concert Artists—A thirtieth-anniversary benefit concert, featuring artists who over the years have benefitted from the organization's encouragement. Soloists include pianist Emanuel Ax (in Mozart's A-Major Concerto), soprano Marvis Martin (singing arias by Handel), cellist Carter Brey (featured in Dvořák's "Waldesruhe"), and Pinchas Zukerman, who (besides serving as violin soloist in works by Bach and Vivaldi) conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Alice Tully Hall. June 16 at 7. For information about tickets, call 307-6655.)

Jerusalem New Music Ensemble—In its first American appearances, the ensemble presents Stephen Horenstein's "Agadot," an inter-arts work that evokes aspects of Jerusalem's history; conducted by the composer. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 16 at 7 and June 17 at 8:30.) (*)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—The Mendelssohn String Quartet performs works by Mendelssohn and Shostakovich, and Robert Stallman is featured in Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet. A benefit concert. (Bargemusic, Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. June 18 at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 1-718 767-1616.)

Maria Bachmann—The violinist performs sonatas by Mozart and Brahms, with pianist Jon Klibanoff. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. June 18 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Grupo SEMA—At Merkin Concert Hall. The ensemble presents two concerts of early music from Spain. June 18 at 8:30: A selection from the more than four hundred spiritual songs assembled under the title "Cantigas de Santa María," by Alfonso X, the thirteenth-century King of Castile and León. . . . ¶ June 19 at 8:30: Renaissance motets and madrigals (in such Iberian guises as *villancicos* and *ensaladas*), directed by Juan Martin. (*)

Bach Aria Group—The ensemble performs Bach's First Orchestral Suite and a signature group of arias from the cantatas (sung by soprano Julianne Baird and mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato, among others), as well as two later works that reflect Bach's influence: Mozart's C-Minor Adagio and Fugue and Stravinsky's Chorale Variations on "Von Himmel Hoch." With an orchestra and chorus, conducted by Samuel Baron. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. June 19 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Guns N' Roses—The Jack Daniel's band of all Jack Daniel's bands is just beginning a two-year tour in support of their new records, "Use Your Illusion I" and "Use Your Illusion II" (which will be released simultaneously this summer). The thundering hard-rock salvo they delivered with their first album, "Appetite for Destruction," has been tempered somewhat by their follow-up LP, "G N' R Lies," and particularly by the song "One in a Million," with its racist and homophobic content. (Obviously, this is not a band full of wit and wisdom. Axl and Slash want to be bad boys, but their recent insistence on final cut for any interviews they do during this tour reeks of—dare we say it?—Diana Rossism. This kind of thought control is not healthy for a band that wants to be perceived as a hard-drinkin' bunch of punks. True rebels, like the Sex Pistols, don't give a damn about being misquoted.) Still, even with their credibility slipping, Guns N' Roses are a hell of a live band, and the odds are that their new material will be explosive. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. June 17 at 7:30.)

"Bali: Cak! and Legong"—Monkey chanting and gamelan music, presented by forty-five performers from Bali. (World Financial Center Plaza, Battery Park City. June 11-12 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.) (*)

Julio Iglesias—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. June 11-15 at 8. Through June 22.

Dan Fogelberg—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. June 12 at 8.

Poison—With Slaughter and Bulletboys. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. June 13 at 7:30.)

Olodum—With Bongo Logic and Lights in a Fat City. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. June 14 at 7.) (*)

The Stylistics—With Ray, Goodman, and Brown. (Beacon Theatre. June 15 at 8.)

Paulinho da Viola—Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. June 15 at 8. (*)

Grateful Dead—With Little Feat. (Giants Stadium. 1-201 935-3900. June 16-17 at 7.)

Central Park SummerStage—June 12 at 8:30: Max Roach, the Uptown String Quartet, and Jump Sister Jump. . . . ¶ June 14 at 8:30: The Jazz Passengers and Paul Zaloom. . . . ¶ June 15 at 3: KRS-One and Blaze. . . . ¶ June 16 at 3: Olodum. (*) (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 360-2777.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Atlanta Braves, June 11-13 at 7:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Astros, June 14 at 7:40, June 15 at 7:10, and June 16 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cincinnati Reds, June 17-19 at 7:40.

Yankees—Away until June 20, when they face the Minnesota Twins.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. . . . At Atlantic City Race Course: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:15. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Bloomsday on Broadway"—The annual celebration at Symphony Space starts at 6 P.M. on June 16 and ends at about midnight. Excerpts from "Ulysses" and other works will be read by Geraldine Fitzgerald, Pauline Flanagan, Jonathan Hadary, Charles Keating, John Rubinstein, and many others. (Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

June Bride—The Spanish artist Miralda thought that Lady Liberty needed to get hitched (though in our opinion she's done just fine on her own these last hundred years), so he designed a white polyester wedding dress for her in an extra-large size. The garment, and a matching veil and tiara, is hanging in the Winter Garden, in the World Financial Center, through June 30.

Readings—June 11 at 6:30: Stockard Channing, Charles Keating, and John Mahoney read works on the subject of rivers. Authors include Conrad, Carver, Hemingway, and Whitman. (Battery Park City Promenade. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 17 at 7: Amy Tan reads from her new novel, "The Kitchen God's Wife." (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 18 at 6:30: Mia Dillon, Philip Casnoff, and Ron Nakahara read in a program called "Arrivals and Departures." Authors include Thomas Wolfe, Beryl Markham, Amy Clampitt, and Shakespeare. (Battery Park City Promenade. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 19 at 8:15: Joyce Carol Oates reads from her own poetry. (Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—June 19 at 6: Paul Rudolph, the architect, will show people around his house. This tour/talk is sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. (For information about tickets and the meeting place, call 935-3960.) . . . ¶ June 19 at 6: Lionel Hampton talks about his life. (Paul Hall, Juilliard School, 144 W. 66th St. For information about tickets, call 877-1800, ext. 633.) . . . ¶ June 19 at 6:15: Michael Pollan gives a talk called "The Great American Lawn." (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. For information about tickets, call 860-6862.) . . . ¶ June 19 at 7: Jewelle Gomez talks about ethnicity in science-fiction television shows. Screenings from "Lost in Space," "Star Trek," and "Alien Nation" will be shown. (Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. No tickets necessary.)

Memorandum—Don't forget Dad on June 16.

Paulinho da Viola

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19			

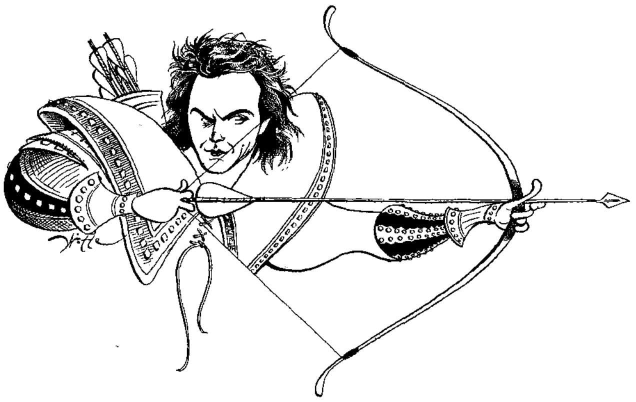
FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through June 13: "Poison" (directed by Todd Haynes). From June 14: "Bright Angel" (Michael Field), with Dermot Mulroney and Lili Taylor.
Theatre 2: "The Comfort of Strangers" (†).
Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Ballad of the Sad Café"(†).
Theatre 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 6: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
June 10: Theatre closed.
June 11-13: "Strip Jack Naked" (Ron Peck); and "Nighthawks" (1978, Peck).
June 14-16: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Muriel" (1963, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.
June 17: Theatre closed.
From June 18: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour"; and "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961, Resnais; in French), with Seyrig.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: Through June 13: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds).



Kevin Costner in "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves"

Theatre 3: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (†).
Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 3: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 4: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 5: "Truth or Dare" (†).
Theatre 6: "An Angel at My Table" (†).
Theatre 7: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Eating" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through June 13: "Faces" (1986, John Cassavetes), with John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel. From June 14: "Shadows" (1961, Cassavetes).
Theatre 2: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven, in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 3: "Delusion" (Carl Colpaert), with Jim Metzler and Jennifer Rubin.
Theatre 4: "Switch" (†).
Theatre 5: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray, Richard Dreyfuss, and Julie Hagerty.
Theatre 6: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).
Theatre 7: "Impromptu" (†).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through June 13: "Noir et Blanc" (Claire Devers).
From June 14: "Perfectly Normal" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez).
Theatre 2: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 3: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.
Theatre 4: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 5: "Soapdish."
Theatre 6: "The Silence of the Lambs"(†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
(Matinées only) "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling; and (evenings only) "Impromptu" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: Through June 13: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss. From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 3: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 4: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 3: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Backdraft" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Truth or Dare" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips.
Theatre 2: "Switch" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through June 13: "Impromptu" (†).
From June 14: "Bright Angel" (Michael Field), with Dermot Mulroney and Lili Taylor.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (†).
Theatre 2: Through June 13: "Backdraft" (†). From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 2: "Dark Obsession" (Nicholas Broomfield), with Gabriel Byrne and Amanda Donohoe.
Theatre 3: "Love Without Pity" (Eric Rochant, in French).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 2: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (74[illegible]7339)
Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (†).
Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Object of Beauty" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: "Backdraft" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Switch" (†).
Theatre 2: Through June 13: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss. From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through June 18: "Begotten" (1989, directed by E. Elias Merhige). From June 19: "The Runner" (1985, Amir Naderi; in Farsi).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Bleecker Movie House, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)
Theatre 1: Through June 13: (Separate admissions) "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer, in Dutch and French); "Termini Station" (Allan King), with Colleen Dewhurst and Megan Follows. From June 14: "Forever Activists—Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" (Judith Montell), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Berkeley in the Sixties" (Mark Kitchell), a documentary.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"The Object of Beauty" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 2: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 2: "Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier; in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.
Theatre 3: "Alice" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Truth or Dare" (†).
Theatre 3: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 4: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 5: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 6: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.
Theatre 7: Through June 13: "City Slickers" (†). From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 8: "Backdraft" (†).
Theatre 9: "Backdraft." (†).

Not surprisingly
the world's most romantic
love letters
come from France.

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Switch" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Thelma & Louise" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 3: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 4: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.
Theatre 5: "Spartacus" (1960, Stanley Kubrick), with Kirk Douglas.
Theatre 6: "Impromptu" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Backdraft" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Citizen Kane" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Phantom of the Opera" (Darwin Knight), with David Staller.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.
Theatre 2: "La Femme Nikita" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"An Angel at My Table" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2 and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Everybody's Fine" (Giuseppe Tornatore, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 2: "Everybody's Fine."
Theatre 3: "Ju Dou" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Truth or Dare" (†); and "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 3: "Thelma & Louise" (†).
Theatre 4: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 5: Through June 13: "City Slickers" (†). From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 6: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (†).
Theatre 2: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Drop Dead Fred" (directed by Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.
Theatre 2: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: Through June 13: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Robin Givens, and Danny Glover. From June 14: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 4: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 5: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez).
Theatre 6: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

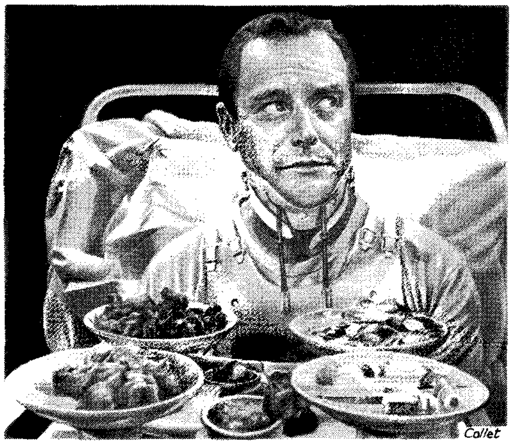
Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.
Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"City Slickers" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

West Side Cinema I and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 2: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips.


Collet

At Film Forum 2, Jack Lemmon in "The Fortune Cookie"

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
The 1991 New York International Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
June 10: "The Apartment" (1960, directed by Billy Wilder), with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine, and Fred MacMurray; and "Irma la Douce" (1963, Wilder), with Lemmon and MacLaine.
June 11: "Fedora" (1979, Billy Wilder), with William Holden, Marthe Keller, and Hildegard Knef; and "Avanti!" (1972, Wilder), with Jack Lemmon and Juliet Mills.
June 12-13: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, and Una O'Connor; and "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes" (1970, Wilder), with Robert Stephens, Colin Blakely, and Genevieve Page.
June 14-16: "One, Two, Three" (†); and "Love in the Afternoon" (1957, Billy Wilder), with Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, and Maurice Chevalier.
June 17: "The Front Page" (†); and "Buddy Buddy" (1981, Billy Wilder), with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau.
From June 18: "Kiss Me, Stupid" (†); and "The Fortune Cookie" (1966, Billy Wilder), with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
June 10: "Les Enfants Terribles" ("The Strange Ones"; 1949, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Nicole Stéphane and Edouard Dermithe; and "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" (1970, Georges Franju; in French), with Francis Huster, Gillian Hills, and Margo Lion.
June 11: "Diamonds Are Forever" (1971, Guy Hamilton) and "You Only Live Twice" (1967, Lewis Gilbert), both with Sean Connery as James Bond.
June 12: "Odd Man Out" (1946, Carol Reed), with James Mason, Robert Newton, and Kathleen Ryan; and "Outcast of the Islands" (1952, Reed), with Trevor Howard, Ralph Richardson, Robert Morley, and Wendy Hiller.
June 13: "Mean Streets" (1973, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, and Amy Robinson; and "Bang the Drum Slowly" (1973, John Hancock), with Michael Moriarty and De Niro.
June 14-15: "Wuthering Heights" (†); and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine.
June 16: "High Anxiety" (†); and "To Be or Not to Be" (1983, Alan Johnson), with Mel Brooks, Anne Bancroft, and Tim Matheson.
June 17: "The Decameron" (1971, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Franco Citti, Ninetto Davoli, and Pasolini; and "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre.
June 18: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger), with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, and Brenda Vaccaro; and "The Graduate" (†).
June 19: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1954, Vittorio De Sica), with Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift; and "The Gold of Naples" (1956, De Sica; in Italian), with Sophia Loren and De Sica.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—June 10 at 3: "Where the Heart Roams" (1987, directed by George Csicsery).... ¶ June 11 at 3: A program of films by Scott Bartlett.... ¶ June 11 at 6: "Shuttlecock" (1989, Jerry Barrish).... ¶ June 13 at 3 and 6: "At the Crossroads: Jews in Eastern Europe Today" (1990, Oren Rudavsky and Yale Strom), a documentary.... ¶ June 14 at 3: "Morgan's Cake" (1988, Rick Schmidt).... ¶ June 14 at 6: "Naked Spaces: Living Is Round" (1985, Trinh T. Minh-ha), a documentary.... ¶ June 15 at 2:30: "The Times of Harvey Milk" (1984, Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen), a documentary.... ¶ June 15 at 5: "Longshoremen and Automation: The Changing Face of the Waterfront" (1986, Berry Minott and Doug Weihnacht) and "Forever Activists—Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" (1990, Judith Montell), both documentaries.... ¶ June 16 at 2:30: "Juan Felix Sanchez" (1982, Calogero Salvo) and "Boneshop of the Heart: Folk Offerings from the American South" (1990, Scott Crocker and Toshiaki Ozawa), both documentaries.... ¶ June 16 at 5: "Dark Circle" (1982, Judy Irving, Chris Beaver, and Ruth Landy), a documentary.... ¶ June 17 at 3: "Before We Knew Nothing" (1988, Diane Kitchen), a documentary.... ¶ June 17 at 6: "Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" (1985, Susana Munoz and Lourdes Portillo), a documentary.... ¶ June 18 at 2 and 6: "ASK Presents: Passport" (1990, Georgy Danelia; in French).... ¶ June 18 at 3: A program of six short films made at Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco.... ¶ June 18 at 6: "Metamorphosis: Man Into Woman" (1989, Claudia Hoover and Lisa Leeman), a documentary.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (477-2714)—June 12 at 6:30 and 9:30: "Vampyr" (1931, Carl Theodor Dreyer).... ¶ June 12 at 8, June 13-14 at 6:30, and June 15-16 at 8: "To Lavoisier, Who Died in the Reign of Terror" (1991, Michael Snow).... ¶ June 13-14 at 8 and June 15 at 6: Three different programs of films by Michel Auder.... ¶ June 14 at 9:30: "Day of Wrath" (1943, Dreyer).... ¶ June 15 at 9:30: "Gertrud" (1965, Dreyer).... ¶ June 16 at 6 and 9:30: "Erotikon" (1929, Gustav Machaty).... ¶ June 19 at 8: "The Dog's Night Song" (1983, Gabor Body; in Hungarian).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—June 13-16 at 2: "Water and Power" (1989, Pat O'Neill).

Museum of Television and Radio, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." June 11-15: "An Evening with Alan King at Carnegie Hall" (1987, HBO) and "The 22nd Annual Emmy Awards" (1970, ABC).... From June 18: "Nancy Wilson Live at Carnegie Hall" (1989, A & E); and "One Night Stand: A Keyboard Concert" (1981, Bravo), with performances by jazz pianists. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30.... ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." June 11-15: "Monty Python's Fliegende Zirkus" (1973, WDR), the English-language special produced for German television.... From June 18: Excerpts of American television appearances by various members of the Python group. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—June 11 at noon: "The Misfits" (1960, John Huston), with Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, and Montgomery Clift. . . . ¶ June 11 at 2:30: "Flipper" (1963, James B. Clark), with Chuck Connors and Luke Halpin. . . . ¶ June 13 at noon: "Casablanca" (1943, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, and Claude Rains. . . . ¶ June 18 at noon: "Woman of the Year" (1942, George Stevens), with Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Fay Bainter, and William Bendix. . . . ¶ June 18 at 2:30: "Lassie Come Home" (†).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—June 14 at 6:30: "My Sweet Lahaina" (1983, Tomio Kuriyama; in Japanese), with Ken Apache and Ken Mitsuishi.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"The Art of Reality: Innovators of the Documentary." June 15 at 2: "Point of Order" (1964, Emile de Antonio). . . . ¶ June 15 at 4: "The Atomic Cafe" (1982, Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty). . . . ¶ June 16 at 2: "The Selling of the Pentagon" (1971, Peter Davis). . . . ¶ June 16 at 3:30: "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter" (1980, Connie Field).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—June 14 at 6:30: Three hours of filmed performances by the soul singer James Brown. . . . ¶ June 15 at 7: Three hours of film of adult-rated standup comedy, with Redd Foxx, Rudy Ray Moore, and others. . . . ¶ June 16 at 2 and 5: "Imitation of Life" (1934, John Stahl), with Louise Beavers, Freddi Washington, Claudette Colbert, and Warren William; and two episodes of the TV program "The Beulah Show" (1951), one with Ethel Waters in the lead role, the other with Hattie McDaniels. . . . ¶ June 16 at 7: "The FBI's War on Black America" (1990, Denis Mueller) and "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary" (1990).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Quad Cinema.)

An Angel at My Table—Based on the autobiography of the New Zealand novelist and poet Janet Frame. The film covers the first forty years or so of the writer's life—she was born in 1924—and takes close to three hours to tell the story. When it's all over, you feel that you know far too little about Janet Frame and far too much about the film's director, Jane Campion. The movie (which was made as a three-part miniseries for Australian television) is a succession of odd, mannered tableaux, more or less in the style of Campion's 1990 art-house hit, "Sweetie." The compositions emphasize the peculiarities of Janet's appearance, especially in her childhood and awkward adolescence: she has a stiff, frizzy mop of bright-orange hair, and her teeth are badly decayed. The Janet Frame we see in this film doesn't seem to have an inner life, and without that she has no life at all. Even the most dramatic events in her life are treated so flatly and elliptically that we're unable to respond; time after time, we find that we can't orient ourselves in crucial scenes, because the director hasn't bothered to establish the characters or the setting. Writers' lives are weird enough without being subjected to this sort of willful disruption of their emotional continuity. Campion's perverse exercise in biographical filmmaking deserves a new title: "My Incomprehensible Career." Janet is played by three actresses: as a child, by Alexia Keogh; as a young teenager, by Karen Fergusson; and, as an adult, by Kerry Fox.—T.R. (6/3/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Loews Fine Arts.)

Backdraft—This urban disaster/action movie makes the audience laugh just once: when a stalwart fireman (Scott Glenn), still on the scene of his latest conquered blaze, takes a drag on a cigarette. It's one of the few grand-old-movie gestures that click in what amounts to a compendium of men-at-work clichés. The plot centers on estranged brothers Kurt Russell (a soon-to-be-legendary firefighter) and William Baldwin (an anxious apprentice), who work out their differences in the midst of mysterious arsons and towering infernos. Gregory Widen's script is like a *Mad* parody played straight, full of "Scenes We Wouldn't Like to See." The effects are boggling, but the director, Ron Howard, employs them like a cross between a night-club hypnotist and a hardware salesman—his characters murmur about fire's mesmerizing and bestial qualities, then he hits the audience with flames and hoses. Russell is appealingly brash until a bogus subplot forces him to suggest borderline psychosis. Jennifer Jason Leigh and Rebecca De Mornay also show up, but only Robert De Niro, as an arson investigator, and Donald Sutherland, as a pyromaniac, rise above the material. The conflagrations may keep some viewers occupied (so do televised Yule logs), but most will remember De Niro's saturnine doggedness and Sutherland's repulsive smirk.—M.S. (34th Street East, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Coronet; through June 13.)

The Ballad of the Sad Café—An adaptation, directed by Simon Callow, of Carson McCullers' fable about unhappy love in a tiny Deep South mill town. The story describes a perfect circle of unrequited love among its three main characters: Miss Amelia Evans (Vanessa Redgrave), a tall, awkward woman who is the town's wealthiest resident and its most forbidding eccentric; her cousin Lymon (Cort Hubbert), a hunchbacked dwarf; and a mean cracker named Marvin Macy (Keith Carradine), who was once, briefly, Amelia's husband. Callow and the screenwriter, Michael Hirst, have adapted the story very faithfully, but they've missed its elusive, slyly comic voice. The narrative unfolds in a solemn, glum, stately manner—more like a Biblical parable than like a crazy backwoods folktale. The filmmakers seem to have been deceived by the apparent simplicity of McCullers' style—its fablelike directness and its bedtime-story intimacy of tone. They aim for a kind of mythic purity that's almost impossible to achieve in the movies. Despite the heroic efforts of Redgrave and Carradine, the characters in this picture don't seem quite human, and the stylized dialogue, much of it lifted outright from McCullers, doesn't have the poetic force that the filmmakers must have hoped it would have; everyone in the movie just sounds simpleminded. This picture is a brave undertaking, and it is clearly a labor of love, but it's doomed. Like all the strange loves of McCullers' story, it does not have a fortunate outcome: its object remains alone, untouched—impervious to the tenderest attentions. Also with Rod Steiger, Lanny Flaherty, and Earl Hindman.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Citizen Kane (1941)—The Orson Welles film is generally considered the greatest American film of the sound period, and it may be more fun than any other great movie. Based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, it's an exuberant, muckraking attack on an archetypal economic baron. With Welles, of course, and Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, George Coulouris, Ruth Warrick, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, William Alland, Paul Stewart, Fortunio Bonanova, Gus Schilling, and Philip Van Zandt. Screenplay by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Welles; cinematography by Gregg Toland; editing by Robert Wise and Mark Robson; music by Bernard Herrmann; art direction by Van Nest Polglase and Perry Ferguson.—P.K. (Loews Festival.)

City Slickers—With Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby; directed by Ron Underwood. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

The Comfort of Strangers—Harold Pinter's screenplay, adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan, is a kinky contemporary variation on the sort of plot that made Victorian readers shiver—the story of innocents lured into the clutches of charming villains. The innocents here are an unmarried English couple (Natasha Richardson and Rupert Everett) vacationing in Venice; the evil seducers are a husband and wife (Christopher Walken and Helen Mirren) whose tastes run to voyeurism and sadomasochism; the dread lair in which the monsters toy with their prey is a huge, ornately furnished apartment with a spectacular view of the city. The director, Paul Schrader, dresses his characters in Armani and sets the camera in motion to swirl gracefully around them, picking up miragelike shimmers from the canals and beautiful but ominous architectural details; the languorous camera movements create an authentically gothic sense of catastrophe just around the corner. Walken glides effortlessly through his role as the embodiment of Old World evil. He gives the character a lordly, sinister air, and suggests, as well, that he's wearing something really odd underneath his superbly tailored white suits. And Richardson is characteristically amazing: she brings a touch of humanity to this rather formal party. The movie improves on the novel by jettisoning its dubious psychology and its pretensions to literary significance. Schrader treats the story as an elegant horror-movie game, a trick done with mirrors, and he carries it off. Dante Spinotti's cinematography and Gianni Quaranta's production design contribute to the luxurious, decadent atmosphere. Music by Angelo Badalamenti.—T.R. (4/8/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Quad Cinema, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

Eating—All the action in Henry Jaglom's film takes place at the fortieth-birthday party of a Southern California woman named Helene (Lisa Richards), and all the characters—thirty-eight of them—are women. None of the women at this party—with the exception of Helene's mother (Frances Bergen), who represents the values of an older generation—can eat without guilt; several of them have clinical eating disorders, for which they hate themselves. Jaglom films them in his usual group-therapy style: the camera remains fixed as characters lob banal confessions and accusations at each other. This is meant to create the illusion of raw emotional truth, but the bulimics' ball Jaglom throws here isn't much of a party, and it's bad therapy, too. The big naked truth that pops out of the cake is: women are so obsessed with their bodies that they're incapable of enjoying even the simple pleasure of eating. Whatever Jaglom may have intended, his film winds up trivializing its theme and humiliating its subjects. He's advertising the movie as "A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food," but its "serious" message is glibly offensive, and there's nothing funny about it. Also with Gwen Welles, Mary Crosby, Nelly Alard, Marlena Giovi, and Daphna Kastner.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

La Femme Nikita—The end of French cinema as we know it. Written and directed by Luc Besson. With Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and (in a cameo) Jeanne Moreau. In French.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Front Page (1974)—Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's rowdy dream of newspaper life, first produced on the stage in 1928, seems to be foolproof, and the structure still stands up in this version, directed by Billy Wilder. But something singular and marvellous has been diminished to the sloppy ordinary. Wilder and his co-scenarist, I. A. L. Diamond, think that the way to make a dialogue comedy work for modern audiences is to convert the dialogue into noise; their version is a harsh, scrambling-for-laughs gag comedy. Walter Matthau, who gets a chance at a really classy American character—Walter Burns, the funny, mean, egomaniac editor—plays him like a whistle-stop Bear Bryant. Matthau, however, still gets his laughs. Jack Lemmon doesn't; his Hildy Johnson—the best reporter in Chicago—is like a mortuary assistant having a wild fling. There's only one freshly felt performance—Austin Pendleton's as Earl Williams, the fuddled anarchist concealed in the famous rolltop desk; speaking softly but hurriedly, the words tumbling together in a slight and affecting stammer, Pendleton provides the only touch of innocence in this loud production. With Carol Burnett, Susan Sarandon, David Wayne, Vincent Gardenia, Allen Garfield, Charles Durning, and Herbert Edelman. (The play was also filmed in 1931, and in 1940 as "His Girl Friday," and in 1988 as "Switching Channels.")—P.K. (Film Forum 2; June 17.)

FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion—This sequel cuts its best caper early. Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown), movie illusionist turned high-tech toymaker, sics a remote-controlled clown—a circusy beaut with red hair and blue eyes—against another kind of clown: a slimy hit man who's beginning to miss his targets. Rollie uses an elaborately rigged jacket to make the mechanical cutup mimic all his creator's movements. The fight becomes a two-against-one, tag-team wrestling match. The whole movie should unfold this wittily. Rollie once again joins up with Leo McCarthy (Brian Dennehy), now a private eye. Together they suss out why the hit man murdered the honest-cop ex-husband of Rollie's new ladylove (Rachel Ticotin). The effects remain special throughout, but the "FX" series swerves wildly on plot turns while dispensing recklessly with bad guys and good women. Diane Venora, who got killed off in the first film, finally gets a decent memorial nod in this one. Josie DeGuzman gives a warm performance as a helpful government hacker, and Joanna Gleason brings a humorous, knowing incisiveness to the role of a tough-talking prosecutor. Directed by Richard Franklin.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Embassy.)

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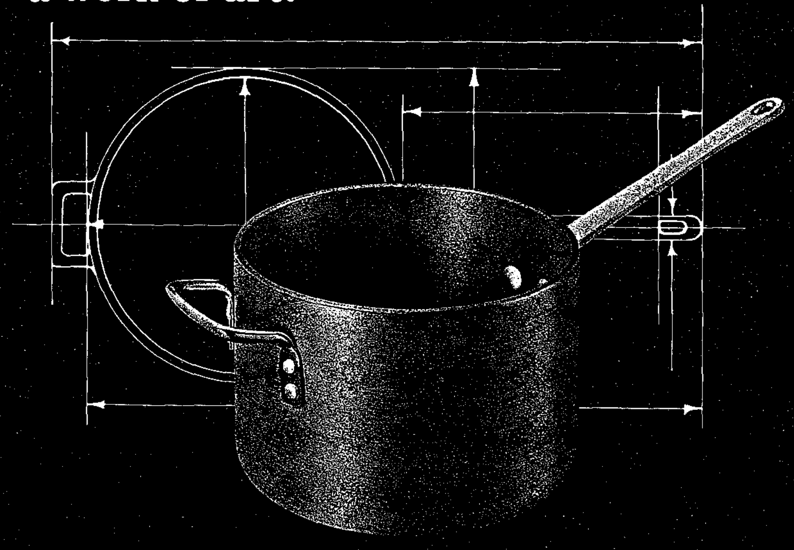

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

The Graduate (1967)—One of the most talked-about hits of the sixties, it was a formative influence on the counterculture, and it was the movie that made Dustin Hoffman a star. He plays Benjamin Braddock, who returns to his swank L.A. home after graduating from college, and feels alienated from his insensitive, self-indulgent parents and their whole set of lewd, money-making friends. As Mrs. Robinson (whose name was used for the title of one of the Simon and Garfunkel songs on the soundtrack), Anne Bancroft is tremendous fun, at first. She's the amusingly voracious middle-aged woman who seduces the naïve Benjamin, and when he's in bed with her and wants to talk about art, the comic moments click along with the rhythm of a hit Broadway show. But then the movie deliberately undercuts its own hip expertise and begins to pander to youth. Benjamin falls in love with Mrs. Robinson's fresh, wide-eyed daughter (Katharine Ross), and the mother is turned into a vindictive witch. (And the comedy turns into melodrama.) Commercially, this worked: the rejection of upper-middle-class values had a special appeal for upper-middle-class college students. The inarticulate Benjamin became a romantic hero for the audience to project onto. The movie functioned as a psychodrama: the graduate stood for truth; the older people stood for sham and for corrupt sexuality. And this "generation gap" view of youth and age entered the national bloodstream; many moviegoers went to see the picture over and over again. Mike Nichols directed, from a script by Calder Willingham and Buck Henry, based on the novel by Charles Webb. With William Daniels and Elizabeth Wilson as Benjamin's parents, and Murray Hamilton as Mr. Robinson. Buck Henry is the hotel clerk. The cinematography is by Robert Surtees; the production design is by Richard Sylbert.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 18.)

High Anxiety (1977)—Mel Brooks' rehash of some of Hitchcock's most famous thriller effects. This is a child's idea of satire—imitations, with a funny hat and a leer. Brooks plays Dr. Thorndyke, a Nobel Prize-winning psychiatrist who is the new director of a Los Angeles asylum—the previous one having died suddenly. He leaves this "Spellbound" situation and goes up to San Francisco for a psychiatrists' convention and into locations that recall "Vertigo." There isn't a whisper of suspense, and there are few earned laughs; all Brooks does is let us know he has seen some of the same movies we have. When he forgets about Hitchcock, he has a couple of buoyant sequences: he does a terrific parody of Frank Sinatra's hyper-nonchalant singing style, breaking up words into sizzling syllables and tossing the mike cord from side to side and snapping it like a whip; and he and the heroine, Madeline Kahn, do an old-Jewish-couple vaudeville-patter number in the San Francisco airport. With Cloris Leachman, Harvey Korman, Ron Carey, Dick Van Patten, Howard Morris, Jack Riley, Charlie Callas, and Albert J. Whitlock, who also did the special effects, and Rudy DeLuca, Ron Clark, and Barry Levinson, who also collaborated with Brooks on the script.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 16.)

Impromptu—James Lapine's film is an ebullient and absurdly entertaining account of the famous love affair of George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. The script, by Sarah Kernochan, makes Sand's wooing and winning of frail, chaste young Chopin into a busy exercise in farce, with a full complement of deception and setbacks and misunderstandings. Celebrities of the Romantic movement—Delacroix, Musset, and Liszt among them—are put through their paces, along with George and Frédéric, in the salons and ballrooms and country houses of eighteen-thirties France; they issue florid declarations of love, hurl barbed epigrams at their rivals, challenge each other to duels, and, over all, make complete asses of themselves in their pursuit of the sublime. They're lively company. The historical figures in this movie are cartoons, but they're cartoons with recognizable human qualities, and the actors look as if they were having a wonderful time charging around in their period costumes. Hugh Grant's Chopin is a brilliant caricature of the Romantic ideal of the artist; he gives the character an air of befuddled unworldliness, and punctuates his readings with delicately timed tubercular coughs. Judy Davis plays Sand—a great actress in a great role. Davis makes Sand's passionate absurdities both funny and tremendously moving; this woman's willingness to embarrass herself seems a kind of romantic heroism. Also with Bernadette Peters, Julian Sands (as Liszt), Mandy Patinkin (as Musset), Emma Thompson, Ralph Brown (as Delacroix), George Corraface, Anton Rodgers, and Anna Massey. The costumes, by Jenny Beavan, are spectacular.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Village East Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Gramercy. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema; through June 13.)

Ju Dou—It's been compared to James M. Cain, but the postman barely rings once in this tale of adultery Chinese style. In a small mountain village in the twenties, an impotent dye-mill owner (Li Wei), crazed over his lack of an heir, tortures his beautiful young bride (Gong Li). She seeks comfort in the arms of his worker nephew (Li Bao-Tian). There's no compelling plot, only the grinding inevitability of fate and tradition. The director, Zhang Yimou, simply metes out punishment to the lovers, the tyrant—and the audience. The lovers' son does most of the damage. He has the lethal power of the Children of the Damned—unfortunately, without the gimmicky zest of their eerie, glowing eyeballs. Zhang started out as a painter and still photographer. He remains one, devoting more attention to the dye mill's set design than to the story or the characters. The bolts of fabric are colored in subtle, vivid hues; the people are made out of whole cloth. In Mandarin.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Jungle Fever—With Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra, directed by Spike Lee. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Kiss Me, Stupid (1964)—This Billy Wilder box-office failure isn't more grating than some of his hits—it's just more insecure. Essentially, it's an old-fashioned boulevard farce, but it was generally panned as "coarse and smutty" and "repellent," and it was condemned by the Catholic Legion of Decency (the first such condemnation of a major-studio production since "Baby Doll," in 1956). United Artists, uneasy about public criticism, sent it out under the label of Lopert Pictures, a subsidiary that usually distributed foreign films. Bad luck plagued this marital-mixup comedy from the start: Peter Sellers, who had been cast as the central character (a composer stuck teaching piano in the desert town of Climax, Nevada), had a heart attack a few weeks into shooting and was replaced by Ray Walston, who is singularly charmless in the role. The plot has the composer attempting to sell his songs to a lecherous star, Dino (Dean Martin), who happens to be passing through town, but he's so fearful that Dino will seduce his wife (Felicia Farr) that he sends her away overnight and brings in the local B-girl, Polly the Pistol (Kim Novak), to pose as his wife. The central miscasting is compounded by the chortling tone, the overemphatic double-entendres, and the drab look of the film, but there's something going on in it. Maybe because of all the dumb leering, Kim Novak is touching in her dreamy-floozy, Marilyn Monroe-like role. Her clothes are so tight she seems to be wearing her dresses under her skin; she seems exposed, humiliated. Her lostness holds the film together. With Henry Gibson, Cliff Osmond, Alice Pearce, Doro Merande, Barbara Pepper, and Mel Blanc. Script by Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond, suggested by a play by Anna Bonacci.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting June 18.)

The Object of Beauty—Jake (John Malkovich) and Tina (Andie MacDowell) are a glamorous American couple camping out in a suite in a swank London hotel. They're unable to settle their account, which when the movie begins stands at about six thousand pounds, because Jake, a speculator, has blown all his money on a bad investment. Jake and Tina are unmarried and have no permanent address; they're charming, attractive drifters, getting by on style. In a sense, they're throwbacks to the sophisticated and slightly disreputable couples who floated airily through thirties romantic comedies: no-strings types who stick together for the best shallow reasons—for sex and laughs and the shared kick of living the high life without having to work too hard. The picture, written and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, is conceived as high-style fluff, but it never delivers quite as much irresponsible fun as it promises. It's like a Lubitsch movie without the speed and the grace and the blissful inconsequentiality. Malkovich, however, is as unaccountably magnetic here as he was in "Dangerous Liaisons." His performance is a postmodern mutation of thirties style, an ungodly hybrid of William Powell and Boris Karloff, and it's sensationally funny. This is as original a piece of acting as you'll ever see in a romantic comedy. The supporting players are an unusually lively group: Lolita Davidovich, Peter Riegert, Joss Ackland, and Bill Paterson.—T.R. (4/22/91) (68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

"Frankly, I doubt I am qualified to arrive at any sensible assessment of Miss Elizabeth Taylor," James Agee wrote late in 1944. "Ever since I first saw the child, two or three years ago, in I forget what minor role in what movie, I have been choked with the peculiar sort of adoration I might have felt if we were both in the same grade of primary school." The film Agee probably was referring to is that favorite of collie lovers, M-G-M's 1943 "Lassie Come Home" (playing June 18 at the Donnell Library Center). Set between the two World Wars, this storybook movie is a dog-loves-boy, dog-loses-boy, dog-regains-boy saga. The emotionally translucent young Roddy McDowall plays a Yorkshire lad whose financially strapped father (Donald Crisp) sells the family canine to a baron (Nigel Bruce). Taylor is the baron's granddaughter—a small but crucial part.

This is an intense film for children—it could be dubbed "Four O'Clock High," since it centers on Lassie's determination to meet McDowall outside his schoolhouse every weekday, even after she's sold. In the movie's second half, she makes it all the way from Scotland. When Taylor pledges to take care of Lassie for the boy, her vow is reassuring. No one with Taylor's youthful incandescence would let down a pal. The film isn't exciting, exactly (Fred M. Wilcox directed); it's square family entertainment. But McDowall and Taylor, and the adult actors, too (including Elsa Lanchester as McDowall's mother and Edmund Gwenn as a peddler), make it lovable. Lassie is a lady among dogs and a great little actress. She uses her long snout expressively, especially when she burrows plaintively under Crisp's arm. That's the way the whole movie nuzzles into your affections.

One, Two, Three (1961)—Machine-gun-paced topical satire of East-West relations, in which the characters shout variations of stale jokes at each other—people are described as sitting around on their assets, and we're invited to laugh at the Russians for rejecting a shipment of Swiss cheese because it is full of holes. The director, Billy Wilder, shot this example of an assembly-line approach to gags in Berlin and Munich (where a full-scale replica of the Brandenburg Gate was constructed). James Cagney expertly mugs his way through the role of an American Coca-Cola executive in Europe; he complains that the East Germans are hijacking his shipments, "and they don't even return the empties." When his wife (Arlene Francis) says that their marriage has gone flat, like a stale glass of beer, Cagney replies, "Why do you have to bring in a competing beverage?" The

"Lassie Come Home"

gags are almost all on this level, and the little sops to sentiment are even worse; the film was a huge success. With Horst Buchholz, Pamela Tiffin, Lilo Pulver, and Red Buttons. Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond wrote the script, based on a Ferenc Molnár one-act play.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; June 14-16.)

Paris Is Burning—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Film Forum.)

Perfectly Normal—Crossed cultures and cross-dressing meet in this blissfully funny romance and odd-couple movie, set in a Canadian backwater. It's one of those rare farces that quench every appetite. Michael Riley plays a brewery worker, hockey player, covert opera lover, and cabdriver; Robbie Coltrane plays the fare who came to dinner—an overt opera lover and reckless restaurateur. These two make beautiful music together. The bulging, ebullient Coltrane is a blithe, antic wind god, blasting his partner with one inspiration after another; the reedy, masterfully deadpan Riley is his untuned aeolian harp. When Coltrane comes up with the idea of a bistro where the waiters and waitresses don operatic costumes and sing arias, Riley agrees to bankroll it, and to slip into drag for a duet (with Coltrane) from Bellini's "Norma." The script, by Eugene Lipinski and Paul Quarrington (based partly on Lipinski's own experiences in provincial Canada), is acutely droll about the incongruity of the heroes' dreams. Yves Simoneau directs in an oddball yet expansive and lushly emotional style that suits Riley's inner passions and Coltrane's outer ones. Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" provides terrific background music for beer bottling as well as for some of the love scenes. And the exuberance of the supporting players is transporting. Deborah Duchene as Riley's girlfriend, Elizabeth Harpur as Coltrane's favorite floozy, Kenneth Welsh, Ellen Rae Hennesey, Jack Nichols, and Kristina Nicoll express the affinities beneath their characters' disparities. You're tickled to meet the citizens of this mixed-up small city. It's like TV's "Northern Exposure" without the whiff of self-congratulation.—M.S. (Cinema Village 3rd Avenue; starting June 14.)

The Silence of the Lambs—Adapted from a novel by Thomas Harris, Jonathan Demme's thriller is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. The heroine, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), is an earnest F.B.I. trainee who is selected to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer; her superiors hope that Lecter's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help them catch a serial killer known as Buffalo Bill, who flays his victims. In the course of the movie, these conversations between the trainee and the psychiatrist turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life in return for his hints on how to find the killer. Hopkins plays the monster with a fine, cold relish: he gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra. And the impact of his performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme's style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. Demme keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. The suspense of this manhunt isn't of the straight-ahead kind we're used to: it's reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance—it has an unnerving intimacy. Also with Scott Glenn, Ted Levine (as Buffalo Bill), Anthony Heald, and Brooke Smith. The screenplay, which is extremely faithful to the novel, is by Ted Tally.—T.R. (2/25/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Quad Cinema, and Embassy.)

Switch—Blake Edwards (unofficially) reincarnates Vincente Minnelli's lame 1964 comedy, "Goodbye, Charlie." The plot and the attitudes *seem* twenty-seven years old. Ellen Barkin has the Debbie Reynolds role—a womanizer who's killed and comes back to earth as a woman. Barkin (like Reynolds) is transformed outside, not in: she's a macho guy stuffed into a curvy figure. When Barkin says she'll never get used to having such a great body, she recalls Reynolds' saying that she'll no longer have to go to Brigitte Bardot movies—she can just pull down the shades. Barkin sermonizes about date rape and male condescension, but usually she expresses her budding feminism by socking men. Barkin feels authentically female only when—gasp—she becomes pregnant. The large and wasted cast includes Jimmy Smits (as his/her best friend/lover), Tony Roberts, JoBeth Williams (as the woman whose gun sets everything off), and Lorraine Bracco (as a lesbian cosmetics magnate) in a squeamish subplot. Edwards' work here has the crude slapstick vitality that appeals mostly to easily titillated twelve-year-olds.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

Thelma & Louise—The heroines, played by Geena Davis (Thelma) and Susan Sarandon (Louise), are a couple of Arkansas women who set out for a weekend in the mountains and wind up speeding through the Southwest, on the run from the law. (Louise has murdered a man who tried to rape Thelma in a roadhouse parking lot.) The movie, written by Callie Khouri and directed by Ridley Scott, is designed to keep pushing the women farther and farther out there—past the point of no return, into the vanishing point of a vast Western landscape, and, finally, over the edge of the world. It's a pretty shameless outlaw fantasy; the feminist justification that the script provides for the heroines' behavior doesn't make their actions any less preposterous. But you can recognize the crudeness of the movie's narrative devices and still have an awfully good time. The film has the hellbent energy of a drive-in exploitation movie, and it's eventful—it isn't just figures drifting dazedly through alienating landscapes. There's an exhilarating ease and intuitiveness in the way Davis and Sarandon work together, and the camera lingers on them as if it couldn't get enough of them. Scott seems to want to show us what they look like in every kind of light and every kind of mood. His direction gives the story a pleasantly dreamy quality: when Thelma and Louise are on the road, the movie has the look of a mirage, a jewelled shimmer that keeps us half hypnotized. He turns Davis and Sarandon into outlaw princesses, and they're so vivid and likable that they carry us past the plot's most obvious contrivances; a little disbelief seems a small price to pay for being allowed to remain in their company. Also with Harvey Keitel, Brad Pitt, Christopher McDonald, Michael Madsen, Timothy Carhart, and Stephen Tobolowsky. The luminous cinematography is by Adrian Biddle.—T.R. (6/3/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Truly, Madly, Deeply—A lovely, original comedy about a young woman, named Nina (Juliet Stevenson), who is obsessed with the memory of her dead lover. The writer and director, Anthony Minghella, establishes an unusual, delicately varied mood, and the film moves gracefully from a realistic mode into a fantastic one. One night, Nina's lover, Jamie (Alan Rickman), reappears in her flat, and his presence seems perfectly natural to us: he has emerged from a setting that is already charged with the heroine's feelings for him. Once he's back, she has to confront, in the most concrete way, what it would really mean to live the rest of her life with a dead guy as her significant other: the movie is less a ghost story than a weird kind of domestic comedy. Minghella draws us into a fresh and startlingly humane vision of modern urban life; the details of the heroine's way of living always seem to point beyond themselves, and there's an emotional unity to everything we see. Minghella writes dialogue that sounds casual but somehow takes us straight to the heart of his work's larger concerns, and he directs the actors beautifully. Rickman is unexpectedly romantic here, and very funny besides. And Stevenson gives a radiant performance: she doesn't have a false moment, or a boring one, in the whole picture. Cinematography by Remi Adefarasin.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3.)

Truth or Dare—Madonna was at her best on "Saturday Night Live," when she played herself for laughs as a pop temptress who puts out for her fans. But in this maddeningly prolonged, self-important, semi-documentary backstage look at her Blond Ambition tour, she plays not just for laughs but for shocks, tears, leers, and, most of all, for adoration. Her way of being truthful and daring is to allow the young director, Alek Keshishian, to depict her as a twenty-four-hour diva who mothers her backup performers and as a scantily clad Statue of Liberty standing up for free expression. The bits of her stage show (shot in 35-mm. color; the rest is in 16-mm. black-and-white) seem ludicrous when she describes them as part of "an emotional journey." The movie has been so over-reported that the celebrity bits with Warren Beatty, Kevin Costner, and Sandra Bernhard, and the friction among members of Madonna's biological and stage families, come off as the retold story. There's no jolt left to seeing Madonna do what you've already read about. The movie is all calculation, no revelation—unless you count the calculation itself as a revelation.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Eastside Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Wuthering Heights (1939)—Laurence Olivier has said that in this film the director, William Wyler, taught him how to act on the screen, and there's no doubt that, as Heathcliff, he shows new passion and power. Unfortunately, Merle Oberon's Cathy—though exquisite—lacks the complementary passion; she's a bit chill and dainty for the character hewn in Emily Brontë's "wild workshop" (to use sister Charlotte's phrase). But it's a beautifully made gothic-romantic classic, with many memorable scenes. Hecht and MacArthur did the script; Gregg Toland was the cinematographer; Alfred Newman did the music. The cast includes Flora Robson, David Niven, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Donald Crisp, Hugh Williams, Leo G. Carroll, Miles Mander, Cecil Kellaway, and Alice Ehlers at the harpsichord. The Ventura area (about forty miles north of Los Angeles) was used for the Yorkshire moors.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 14-15.)

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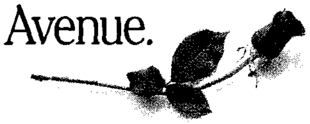

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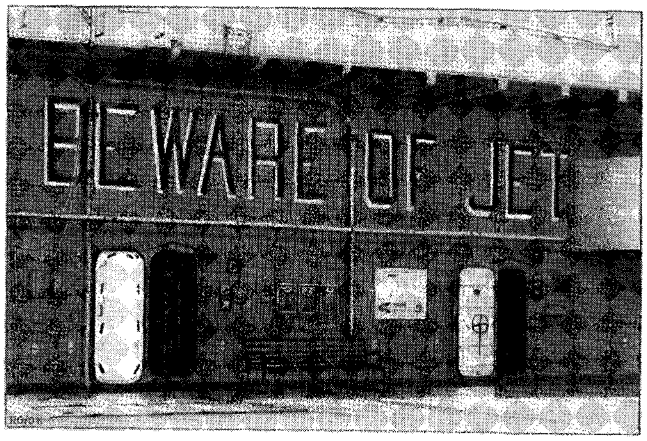
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

LIKE an untreated infection within the political system, the Iran-Contra affair continues to grow, spreading corruption not only into the future but, oddly, back into the past as well. The inconclusive results of the congressional hearings on the affair loom over the reaction, or lack of one, to recent allegations about a so-called October Surprise before the 1980 Presidential election. This charge—that members of Ronald Reagan's campaign staff, in order to assure President Carter's defeat, promised arms shipments to certain Iranian officials if Iran would wait until after the election to release the American hostages being held in Teheran—has lingered ever since Reagan's Inauguration. In mid-April of this year, however, Gary Sick—an adjunct professor of Middle Eastern politics at Columbia University, who had had responsibility for Iran as a member of the National Security Council staff under Presidents Ford, Carter, and, briefly, Reagan—published a long Op-Ed article in the *Times* laying out a carefully argued case that such a deal was actually made.

Mr. Sick explains that in the course of researching a book about the Reagan Administration's policy toward Iran he conducted hundreds of interviews, and that his sources included government officials from several countries in Europe and the Middle East and also "low-level intelligence operatives and arms dealers who are no boy scouts." In the end, however, it was not the credentials of his sources but their knowledge of "certain events" that Sick himself knew about only by virtue of his service on the N.S.C. staff, and "the absence of contradictions on the key elements of the story," that pushed him to continue his investigation—until, he says, "the weight of testimony" overcame his initial doubts.



The heart of Sick's story concerns a series of meetings that William Casey, then Reagan's campaign manager and soon to be his C.I.A. director, is alleged to have had with Iranian officials in Madrid and Paris during the summer and fall of 1980. It was at these meetings—Sick says that he has "more than 15 sources who claim direct or indirect knowledge" of them—that an agreement was supposedly reached: the Iranians would not release the hostages before the election, and, in return, the Reagan men would persuade Israel to ship arms and spare parts to Iran. In late October, Israel did in fact send a shipment of American aircraft tires to Iran, in direct violation of the Carter Administration's policy. Just after the shipment, Sick writes, "a series of delaying tactics . . . by the Iranian Parliament stymied all attempts by the Carter Administration to act on the hostage question . . . before Election Day." After Carter's defeat, and shortly before Reagan's Inauguration, the Iranians suddenly offered a series of "startling concessions," which resulted in the hostages' being released minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as President. Soon after that, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of weapons began flowing from Israel to Iran, in shipments that the Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arens asserted in 1982 were coördinated with the Reagan Administration "at almost the highest of levels."

The implications of this story, if it's true, are vast. A small group of Americans with no position in the government, and no electoral mandate, essentially seized control of the foreign policy of the United States; and, for all practical purposes, the future leadership of the country, not to mention the fate of the fifty-two Americans being held hostage, was being negotiated in secret meetings with a handful of shady characters in a hotel room in Paris. But what is even more striking about Mr. Sick's accusation is the lack of reaction it has elicited.

The White House, after saying little for two weeks, put forward its spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, to belittle Mr. Sick as "the Kitty Kelley of foreign policy" and to assert, falsely, that "at the time, that was all looked into." Then, nearly a month after Mr. Sick's article appeared, President Bush, in response to a general question about the October Surprise, offered this strange statement: "I can only say categorically that the allegations about me are grossly untrue—factually incorrect—bald-faced lies. . . . I'm talking about myself. And I can categorically deny any contact with the Iranians or anything having to do with it. . . . It's been looked at exhaustively. But all I'm talking about—all I can speak for is my own participation or lack thereof.” Since Mr. Bush's presence or absence in Paris is by no means central to the affair—and Mr. Sick is careful to say that he hasn't made up his mind about an allegation that Mr. Bush was there—the President's meticulously circumscribed denial, instead of forestalling further inquiry, seems almost to compel it.

And yet Congress has shown itself curiously unwilling to investigate. Not until mid-May did Capitol Hill sources confirm that leaders in the House had decided to launch a “low-key investigation” into the matter. The low calibre of this “preliminary” inquiry—it is being conducted by committee staff people, who have no power to subpoena witnesses or documents—suggests that Congress is more interested in burying the story than in uncovering it. Republicans have no interest in investigating, because it might damage President Bush; Democrats have no interest, because it might not—or, worse, might make them seem politically opportunistic.

Former President Carter, for his part, has said that the evidence of wrongdoing “is so large . . . I think there ought to be a more thorough investigation of the allegations.” Mr. Carter would be practically alone were it not for the former diplomat Moorhead Kennedy, a Republican, who was one of the hostages. He points out that Sick's story, if it is true—“And I believe it to be true,” he says—means not only that his own captivity, as well as that of his fellows, was prolonged for many months but that William Casey and other future Reagan-Bush officials were co-conspirators in federal crimes, including treason, and, of course, in trading arms for hostages.

As Mr. Sick notes, the story of the October Surprise carries with it the suggestion that “the arms-for-hostage deal that in the twilight of the Reagan Presidency became known as the Iran-contra affair, instead of being an aberration, was in fact the re-emergence of a policy that began even before the Reagan-Bush Administration took office.” Such crimes would represent the corrupting not only of United States foreign policy but of the American electoral process—by what Mr. Sick calls “a willingness to pursue private, high-risk foreign policy adventures out of sight of the electorate.”

We live, Americans like to say, in a nation of laws. But great political crimes sometimes threaten to burst the bounds of law. The Watergate scandal was prosecuted in the first instance by Congress—in public hearings that led not only to a cleansing of the political system but also to the passage of a number of historic statutes intended to prevent future abuses of power. Congress's investigation of Iran-Contra, however, has produced little punishment, political or otherwise, and no reform. Oliver North may yet escape even his meagre sentence: twelve hundred hours of community service, probation, and a fine. And now Robert Gates, who, as deputy director of the C.I.A. during Iran-Contra, helped prepare the highly misleading congressional testimony of its then director, William Casey, and who, in the face of questions about his role in the scandal, was forced to withdraw his nomination to succeed Casey, has again been nominated for the post by George Bush, and his confirmation is widely expected.

Perhaps the most disquieting legacy of Iran-Contra, in which extremely serious political crimes were exposed and then left largely unexorcised, is a kind of pervasive moral lassitude, in which charges that the integrity of the 1980 Presidential election was compromised with the help of the Iranian government evoke an almost bored reaction. It now appears that the charges will be left to linger, unanswered and uninvestigated, because no one with any power sees it to be in his personal political interest to confront them. The dictum that we live in a nation of laws can also be understood ironically—that ours has become a nation *only* of laws. For laws without the will to enforce them and confront the consequences remain simply words on paper.

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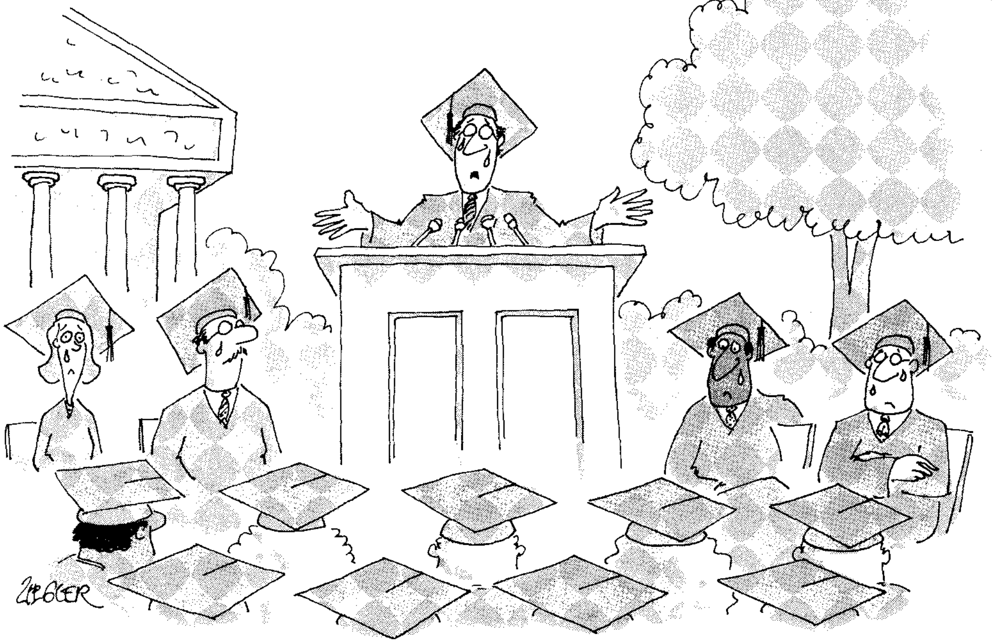
No Buffalo Idea

If your house is on fire, don't call Nate Freedman. But if you need a couple of dozen plastic fire hats or fire-extinguisher squirt guns for a child's birthday party, or are looking for the latest issue of the *Fire Apparatus Journal*, or want some thigh-high regulation rubber fire boots to wear while, say, cleaning out a horse stall, then Nate Freedman, the proprietor of a recently opened shop called the Firefighter's Friend, may be just the person to help you out. The Firefighter's Friend is not an F.D.N.Y. gift shop, even though it stocks F.D.N.Y. T-shirts, sweatshirts, ball caps, and belt buckles, and even though it's practically next door to a firehouse. It's a private enterprise that sells fire-related merchandise—everything from “The Firefighter's Cookbook” and fire-insurance-company memorabilia to Norman Rockwell-style prints with titles like “White Socks at Roll Call.”

Mr. Freedman, a portly, gruff-voiced middle-aged man with white hair and a full white mustache, sort of looks like a retired firefighter, but it turns out that he has never operated a hose any bigger than a garden hose. Nor is he a lifelong fire nut. His entry into the world of ladder companies, Dalmatians, and smoke inhalation came about largely by chance. For most of his professional life, Mr. Freedman was a P.R. man. Then, in 1985, at age fifty, he quit his job and opened a printing franchise on Lafayette Street, between Prince and Spring. Mr. Freedman said recently of that business, “It was fun at first, but after a while it's just another business. And because it's printing, it's always deadlines and anxiety. So I said, ‘There must be an easier way.’ ”

A few years ago, when the business was booming, Mr. Freedman signed a ten-year lease on his printing shop and two adjacent storefronts. When times changed—and his landlord wouldn't let him out of his lease, he had to do something with a lot of empty space. As it happened, the printing shop was just up the street from a firehouse attached to the F.D.N.Y.'s medical center, to which all the city's firefighters have to come once a year for a physical. Mr. Freedman said, “I said to myself, ‘Look, nobody comes here but firefighters. What can I do here? Maybe . . .’ ” He hunched his shoulders and held out his hands palm upward to illustrate the precise moment he hit on the idea of the Firefighter's Friend. “So I called a man I know who was the advertising director at *Firehouse* magazine, and I said, 'Is this a good idea or a crazy idea?' Once, I thought it might make sense to raise buffalo in upstate New York. Now, that was a crazy idea. I know because a guy from North Dakota that I called on the phone to discuss it with, who raises buffalo, said you should have the buffalo fifty miles from the nearest road and the nearest dog. You can't *get* fifty miles from a dog in New York State. So I didn't know if this was a buffalo idea or a good idea." The friend at *Firehouse* thought it was a good idea. Mr. Freedman recalled, "He said, 'Never mind the guys from the New York Fire Department who are nearby. There are a good two hundred thousand buffs, who just like the Fire Department. And there's got to be a couple million people across the country who are volunteer firemen.' "



"Fellow M.B.A. graduates of the Class of '91—hey, what can I say?"

As Mr. Freedman spoke, his son Noam, who was helping to launch the enterprise, was busy puttering around the shop—adjusting displays, taking notes on inventory, and occasionally emending his father's comments. A stocky young man with long black hair and an earring, Noam, too, is new to the fire game. "I'm an antiques buff," he said. "My father calls me the pack rat. When I heard there was a collectible end of this, I picked up all the books and read them, and memorized as much as I could. Now I keep my eyes open." Mr. Freedman and his son get their wares from a variety of places, including fire-department-supply houses, toy shows, flea markets, and garage sales. The only qualification an item needs to get on the store's shelves is that it have something—*anything*—to do with firefighting: it can be an antique black fire helmet with a brass eagle on top or an iron-on patch of a Dalmatian peeing on a fire hydrant.

Mr. Freedman doesn't hesitate to admit that he is still learning the firefighting-merchandise business. First, there was the matter of remembering to say "firefighter" instead of "fireman." "My generation doesn't think so much about that," he said, and until the eleventh hour the store was going to be called the Fireman's Friend. Then there was the matter of some firehouse calendars he ordered, which featured bikini-clad girls pretending to put out fires. "Not all my timing has been great," Mr. Freedman said. "Soon after the calendars came in, I heard a rumor that there was a circular going around the firehouses saying there better not be any cheesecake in them, because it's sexually demeaning." The calendars presented another problem, too. "I thought a masculine environment would be the right thing for the store," Mr. Freedman said. "But all these fire-crazy kids come in. Now I keep the calendars in the back, because, frankly, I'm uncomfortable."

Walking by the Firefighter's Friend these days, you might think that the store was half owned by Ron Howard. One of the store's two windows is almost filled with promotional material for Mr. Howard's new film, "Backdraft," which is largely about firefighting. Mr. Freedman explained that someone at Universal Pictures, which is distributing the film, saw a newspaper ad for the Firefighter's Friend and called up Mr. Freedman to offer a joint promotional deal. Mr. Freedman regards this development as just another rung on the ladder of chance that led to his new enterprise. "Ron Howard has gone to work for Nate Freedman to try to make this place fashionable," he said. "I didn't know that I could afford him."

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Waiting for Keith

TWO years ago, five high-school juniors in Weston, Connecticut, formed a band. They thought of calling themselves Five Easy Pieces, the Overdue Books, or the Tacky Stretchoid Warriors, but settled on the name No Vacancy. Last month, when all five returned to Weston after their first year of college, they reunited on the Memorial Day weekend to play at a fair on the lawn outside Weston's elementary school. It was certainly more thrilling for them to play in public than in their parents' rec rooms, where they had often practiced, but this time the band was, in the boys' words, "really psyched." There was a rumor circulating that Keith Richards, of the Rolling Stones, had been spotted at the fair on its first day. If that was true, the boys figured, he might return the next day, when they were scheduled to play.

No Vacancy felt they had an ace in the hole: they had already met Keith Richards, sort of. Two years ago, when the five went Christmas carolling they stood and sang outside his house in Weston. One of them recalls that Mr.

Richards hid inside the house with the lights turned off, and his wife cracked open the door to see what they wanted. Last year, things went even better. They were allowed inside the vestibule, where they sang "Jingle Bells," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and "Frosty the Snow Man" to the most sinister-looking member of the Rolling Stones and his family. Dave Piazza, who is No Vacancy's keyboard player and vocalist, remembers Richards as being polite but looking "very small with kind of messy hair."

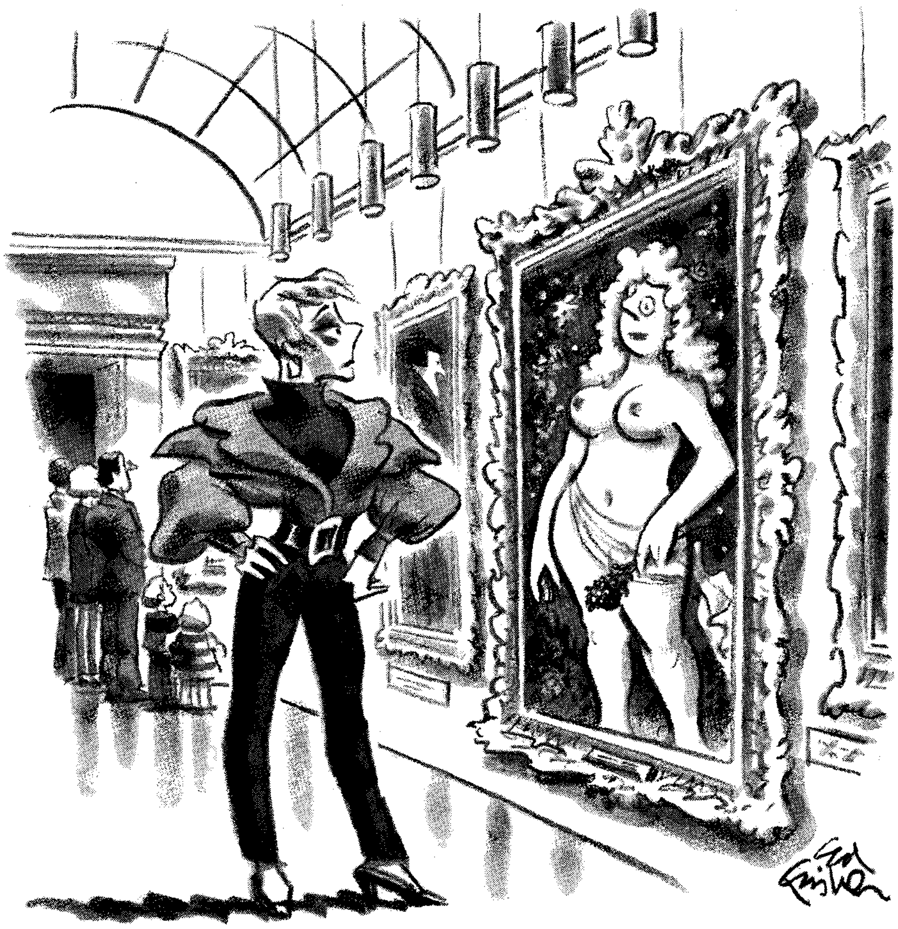
The members of No Vacancy planned a strategy to lure Richards back to the fair. Because his estate is big and under heavy security, they decided that the best way to get his attention would be to tack a piece of typing paper to the warning sign at the end of his driveway, with this invitation on it:

> Dear Mr. Richards—Hey, remember us? The X-Mas singers? A few of the X-Mas carolers are in a band called No Vacancy and we are playing at a concert this coming Monday (today) at the fair. We would love it if you would come and listen to the tunes with your family. Feel free to bring your axe. Sincerely, No Vacancy. PS: We're playing "Brown Sugar."

At three in the afternoon, the boys began unloading their equipment on the asphalt driveway that surrounds the elementary-school building. It was hot and humid, and the band members were sweating as they struggled to set up their drum set, untangle the cables for the electric guitars, and find an extension cord that had somehow vanished. At four o'clock, they started to play. About fifty people had arranged themselves on the grass to listen. As the band played, kids walked from blanket to blanket, socializing. A woman in a madras skirt held a black Labrador puppy in the air, dancing it around to the music the way you would a baby.

The boys in the band scanned the crowd for signs of Keith. He could have been anywhere: eating a grilled hot dog at the concession stand, or browsing through the dollar-a-bag sale of used books and contemplating the purchase of "The Friendly Dolphins" or "Americans Into Orbit," or maybe taking the ride that flattens people against its side by centrifugal force. No Vacancy knew that rock musicians are never prompt, so they made "Brown Sugar" their penultimate number. Dan Goldman, the bass guitarist, really got into the spirit of the song. A robust boy with dark curly hair, he could not hope to imitate Keith Richards' kohl-rimmed eyes or his fabled vampirish pallor, but he had practiced the bent-kneed walk of rock-and-roll guitarists, and when he hit the big chords he jumped in the air, arching his arm dramatically over the vibrating strings. Chip Verspyck, the saxophonist, was wailing away like Bobby Keyes.

After the last song was played and the instruments were packed up, Mark Robohm, the drummer, took Scott Rohrback, the lead guitarist, and Dave Piazza along to his parents' house, where they cooked hamburgers on a charcoal grill and wondered what had happened to Keith. After dinner, they left for a friend's house to review a videotape that had been made of their performance. It was twilight, and as the boys drove away, in Mark's battered orange Volvo, thunderclouds were rolling in. The boys took a roundabout route, past Keith Richards' house, and scanned the driveway to see if their note was still there. It was not, and they didn't know whether Keith had ever seen it. They tried to be philosophical about things. "He stood us up," Mark Robohm said, sighing. "But I guess that's rock and roll."

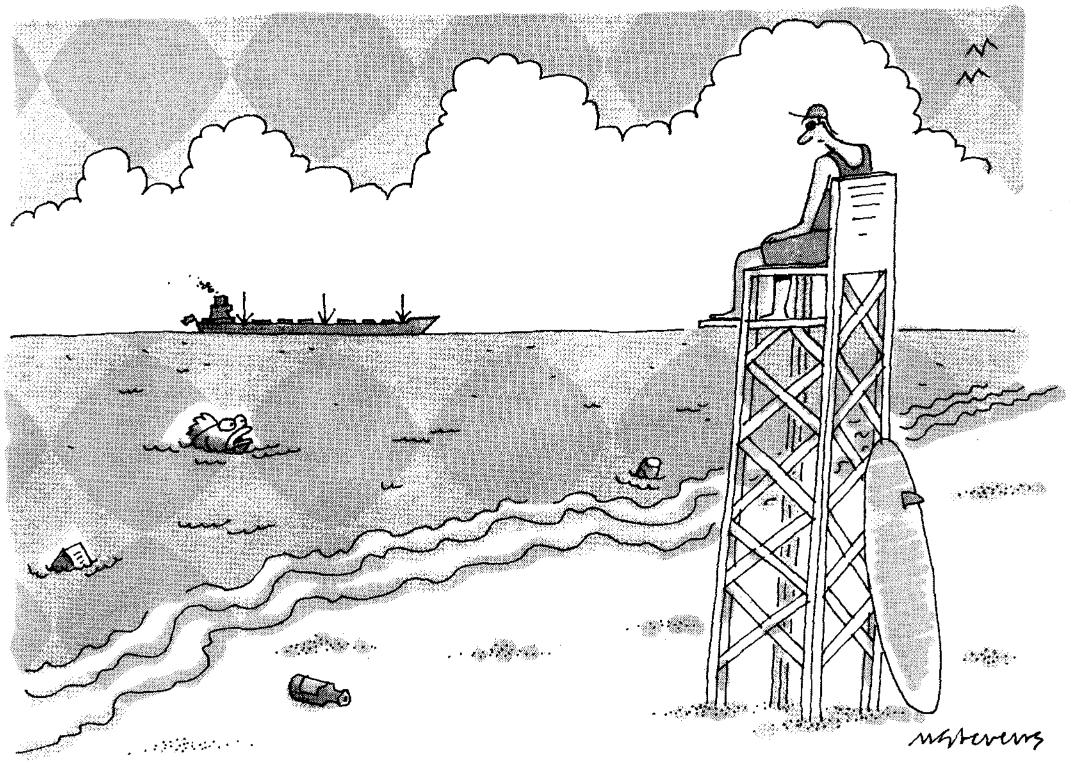


Special

THIS is Brandon. Brandon has perfect teeth. Actually, Brandon has no teeth to speak of yet, but so far they're perfect. Brandon is three months old. Today is his first modelling go-see, held at the Columbus Pre School and Gym, on the Upper West Side, where a children's modelling agency called Closeups Kids is conducting a kiddie cattle call. Brandon just woke up from his nap. Brandon's mother has been up for hours and has boundless energy. Brandon is getting busy with some drooling, but mostly he's relaxing. "I wish he'd wake up. He's usually perkier than this," his mother says, swivelling Brandon's head around.

"Generally, what's Brandon like, personality-wise?" asks Michael Weinstein, a portrait and fashion photographer who is helping to judge the applicants. He gives Brandon a good looking over and then says, "Is he a happy kind of guy?"

"This is a child who wakes up singing," Brandon's mother says, shifting Brandon from one hip to the other. "In my life, I've never seen a happier child. The only time he goes off the wall is when he's hungry. Other than that, he's Mr. Happy. I could picture him on 'thirtysomething.' "



"Help!"

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This is Sebastian. Sebastian is a couple of dozen inches tall, and is possessed by a persistent wanderlust. Sebastian is on a leash. He saunters to the end of his leash, confronts its limits, and bounces backward. Several hundred children between the ages of five weeks and twelve years are waiting to submit applications stating the number and condition of their teeth, their height in inches, their hair length, and their shoe size, all in the hope of becoming the neonate Linda Evangelista, with high-paying assignments like the BabyGap corporate icon, or the kid who sits in the middle of the Michelin tire, or the Purina Puppy Chow toddler. In these ranks, Sebastian stands out. It may have something to do with his clothes. Sebastian is sporting a color-block jumpsuit in jewel tones, with contrasting buttons and patch pockets, and with a balloonlike silhouette. You can imagine Sebastian going over very big with the designer-diaper demographic. Michael Weinstein takes a Polaroid portrait of Sebastian for the judges' later consideration and shows the results to Sebastian's mother. "Oh, geez, do another one," she says, handing it back. "This makes him look dopey."

This is Ashley. In fact, this is one of scores of Ashleys lined up along Columbus Avenue. On the other hand, the line includes just one Loretta, one Marigo, one Ambreen, one Terrance, one Travis, one Maurice, one Cashley, and one Enerria, whose name came to her mother in a dream she had while pregnant. The Ashley now at the head of the line is sucking on a flannel blanket and gazing into middle space. "Be honest with me," Ashley's mother says to Michael Weinstein. "I can take it. Is she *too* big? I don't mean agewise, I mean proportion-wise. I mean, you can tell me. Does she have a future in modelling or not?"

"She might grow into her body," Michael says, speaking carefully. "There's no such thing as 'too big,' exactly. She might end up perfect. In kids' modelling, size ten is the ultimate. After that, there's not that much work."

"I know she's kind of peculiar-looking," Ashley's mother goes on. "But I was thinking we could try and get her into the peculiar-kid ads. Maybe something ethnic. I picture her as a sort of United Colors of Benetton kind of baby."

This is Lindsay. Unlike many of the children here, Lindsay has already reached that important stage of life in which she is quite skilled at walking and is fully possessed of the power of speech. Lindsay has long legs, a boxy torso, meticulously arranged straight silver-blond hair, and the rigid bearing of a Buckingham Palace guard—probably to avoid disturbing the precise way her hair is fanned out across her shoulders. Lindsay hands her application to Brett Mirsky, the editor of *Barbie, The Magazine for Girls*, who is one of the judges, and says, "I'm eight years old, but I should let you know that I can play older girls, too—ten, twelve, whatever."

"I see," Brett says.

"I look forward to hearing from you," Lindsay adds.

"Very special little girl," Brett says as Lindsay walks away.

"We look for that something special," says Patti Fleischer, the founder of Closeups Kids, who has been walking around the room surveying the applicants. "I always say we have the most special kids in the entire city."

"I can spot that something special when I see it," Michael Weinstein says. "Well, hello, and who is this?"

"This is Joseph."

"Hi there, Joseph. What size is Joseph?"

"Well, it depends on the outfit. He's five weeks old. He can fit a variety of sizes—newborn, three months. It depends on the style of the clothes. Can I see that Polaroid before we leave? Oh, this picture is no good. You got his worried look. Can you at least mark on here that he has another look, and also that his eyes are a lot bluer than this?"

This is Alex. Alex has a naturally occurring mohawk and is preoccupied with his bottle. Alex's mother is furious at herself, because she actually meant to bring Bradley, her other baby, who is really more the baby-model type. She looks at Alex and says, "Now, how on earth did I do *that*?"

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AND QUEEN ISABELLA OF SPAIN CONSUMMATE THEIR RELATIONSHIP, SANTA FÉ, JANUARY, 1492

COLUMBUS, a foreigner, follows Queen Isabella for an eternity without entirely giving up hope.

In what characteristic postures?

Proud yet supplicant, the head held high but the knee bent. Fawning yet fearless; possessed of a certain saucy vulgarity, he gets away with it by virtue of his confidence-man's charm. However, as time passes, the ingratiating aspects of his stance are emphasized; the sea-dog raffishness wears a little thin. As do his shoes.

His hope. It is of what?

Obvious answers first: He hopes for preferment. He wants to tie the Queen's favor to his helmet, like a knight in a romance. (He owns no helmet.) He has hopes of cash, and of three tall ships, Niña Pinta SantaMaría; of, in fourteen hundred and ninety-two, sailing across the ocean blue. But, on his first arrival at court, when the Queen herself asked him what he desired, he bowed over her olive hand and, with his lips a millimetre away from the great ring of her power, murmured a single, dangerous word:

"Consummation."

These unspeakable foreigners! The nerve! Consummation, indeed! And then following in her footsteps, month after month, as if he stood a chance. His coarse epistles, his tuneless serenades beneath her casement windows, obliging her to have them closed, shutting out the cooling breeze. She had better things to do, a world to conquer & so forth, who did he think he was? —Foreigners can be dogged. And can also, on account of language difficulties, fail to take a hint. Then again, let us not forget, it is considered de rigueur *to keep a few foreigners around. They lend the place a certain cosmopolitan tone. They are often poor and consequently willing to perform divers necessary but dirty jobs. They are, moreover, a warning against complacency, their existence in our midst reminding us that there are quarters in which (hard as it is to accept) we ourselves would be considered foreigners.—But to speak so to the Queen!—Foreigners forget their place (having left it behind). Given time, they begin to think of themselves as our equals. It is an unavoidable hazard. They introduce into our austerities their Italianate blandishments. Nothing for it. Turn a deaf ear, look the other way. They rarely mean real harm, and go too far only infrequently. The Queen, be assured, can look after herself.*

Columbus at Isabella's court is quickly burdened with the reputation of a crazy man. His clothes are excessively colorful and he drinks, also, to excess. When Isabella wins a military victory she celebrates it with eleven days of psalms and the sonorous severities of priests. Columbus crashes about outside the cathedral waving a wineskin. He is a one-man debauch.

See him, the drunkard, his huge, shaggy head filled with nonsenses! A fool with a glittering eye dreaming of a golden paradise beyond the western edge of things.

"Consummation."

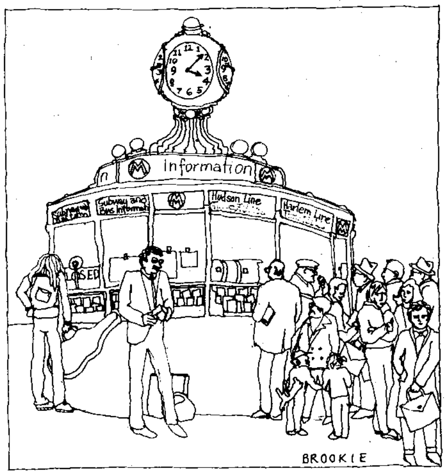
The Queen plays with Columbus.

At luncheon she promises him everything he wants and cuts him dead later the same afternoon, looking through him as if he were a veil.

On his saint's day she summons him into her inmost boudoir, dismisses her girls, permits him to braid her hair and, for a moment, to fondle her breasts. Then she summons her guards. She banishes him to the stables and piggeries for forty days. He sits forlorn on horse-munched hay while his thoughts run on distant, fabled gold. He dreams of the Queen's perfumes but awakes, gagging, in a pigsty.

Toying with Columbus pleases the Queen.

And pleasing the Queen, he reminds himself, may help him to achieve his purposes. Pigs rootle by his feet. He grits his teeth. "Pleasing the Queen is good."



Does she torment him merely for sport?

Or: because he is foreign and she is unused to his ways and meanings.

Or: because her ring finger, still hot with the memory of his lips his breath, has been—how-you-say?—*touched*. Tentacles of warmth spread backward from her fingers toward her heart. A turbulence has been aroused.

Or: because she is torn between the possibility of embracing his scheme with a lover's abandon, and the more conventional, and differently (maliciously) pleasurable option of destroying him by laughing, finally, after much foreplay, in his foolish supplicant face.

Columbus consoles himself with possibilities. Not all possibilities are consoling, however.

She is an absolute monarch. (Her husband is an absolute zero: a blank, couldn't be colder. We will not speak further of him.) She is a woman whose ring is often kissed. It means nothing to her. She is no stranger to blandishments. She resists them effortlessly. She is a tyrant, who numbers among her possessions a private menagerie of four hundred and nineteen fools, some grotesquely malformed, others as beauteous as the dawn. He, Columbus, is merely her four hundred and twentieth idiot. He is her clown, her performing flea. This, too, is a plausible scenario.

Either: she understands him, his dreams of a world beyond the world's end, so profoundly that she's spooked by it, and she turns first toward it, then away;

or: she doesn't understand him at all, nor cares to understand.

Take your pick.

What's certain is that *he* doesn't understand *her*. Only the facts are plain. She is Isabella, all-conquering Queen. He is her invisible (though raucous, multicolored, wine-bibbing) man.

"Consummation."

The sexual appetites of the male

"I'm tired of food."

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decline; those of the female continue, with the advancing years, to grow. Isabella is Columbus's last hope. He is running out of possible patrons, sales talk, flirtatiousness, hair, steam. Time drags by. Isabella gallops around, winning battles, expelling Moors from strongholds, her appetites expanding by the week. The more of the land she swallows, the more warriors she engulfs, the hungrier she gets. Columbus, aware of a slow shrivelling inside him, scolds himself. He should see things as they are. He should come to his senses. What chance does he have here? Some days she makes him clean latrines. On other days he is on body-washing duty, and after a battle the bodies are not clean. Soldiers going to war wear man-size diapers under their armor because the fear of death will open the bowels, will do it every time. Columbus was not cut out for this sort of work. It is getting him nowhere. He tells himself to leave Isabella, once and for all.

But there are problems: his advancing years, the patron shortage. Once he decamps, he will have to forget the western voyage. The body of philosophical opinion which avers that life is absurd has never appealed to him. He is a man of action, revealing himself by deeds.

But without the possibility of the voyage he will be obliged to accept the meaninglessness of life. This, too, would be a defeat. Invisible in hot tropical colors, unrequited, he remains, dogging her footsteps, hoping for the ecstasy of her glance.

"The search for money and patronage," Columbus says, "is not so different from the quest for love."

SHE is omnipotent. Castles fall at her feet. The Jews have been expelled. The Moors prepare their last surrender. The Queen is at Granada, riding at her armies' head. She overwhelms. Nothing she has wanted has ever been refused. All her dreams are prophecies. Acting upon information received while sleeping, she draws up her invincible battle plans, foils the conspiracies of assassins, learns of the infidelities and corruptions for which she blackmails both her loyalists (to ensure their support) and her opponents (to ensure theirs). The dreams help her forecast the weather, negotiate treaties, and invest shrewdly in trade.— She eats like a horse and never gains an ounce. The earth adores her footfall. Its shadows flee before the brilliance of her eyes. Her face is a lush peninsula set in a sea of hair. Her treasure chests are inexhaustible. Her ears are soft question marks, suggesting some uncertainty. Her legs.—Her legs are not so great.

— She is full of discontents.

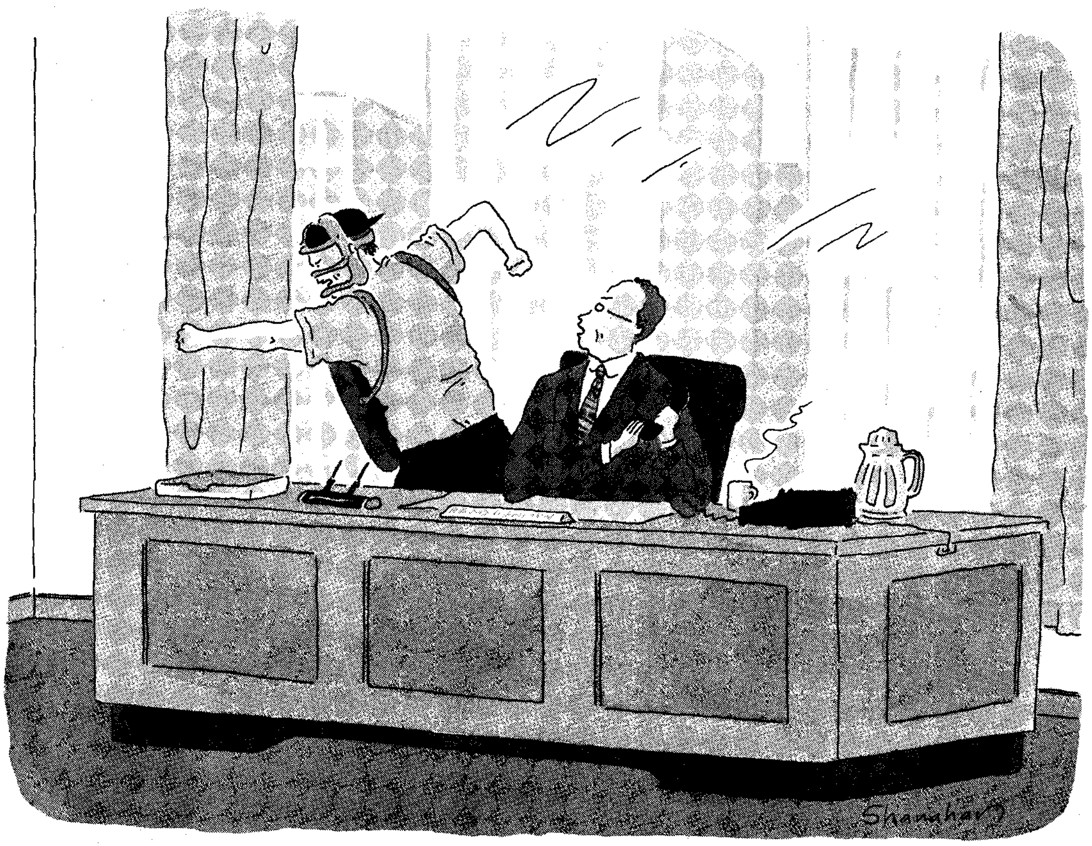
—No conquest satisfies her, no peak of ecstasy is high enough.

— See: there at the gates of the Alhambra is Boabdil the Unlucky, the last Sultan of the last redoubt of all the centuries of Arab Spain. Behold: now, at this very instant, he surrenders the keys to the citadel into her grasp: there!— And as the weight of the keys falls from his hand into hers, she . . . she . . . yawns.

COLUMBUS gives up hope.

While Isabella is entering the Alhambra in listless triumph, he is saddling his mule. While she dawdles in the Court of the Lions, he departs in a frenzy of whips elbows hooves, all rapidly obscured by a dust cloud. Invisibility claims him. He surrenders to its will. Knowing he is abandoning his destiny, he abandons it. He rides away from Queen Isabella in hopeless fury, rides day and night, and when his mule dies under him he shoulders his ridiculous Gypsy-patchwork bags, their rowdy colors muted now by dirt, and walks. Around him stretches the lush plain her armies have subdued. Columbus sees none of it, not the land's fertility or the sudden barrenness of the vanquished castles looking down from their pinnacles. The ghosts of defeated civilizations flow unnoticed down the rivers whose names—Guadalthis and Guadalthat—retain an echo of the annihilated past. Overhead, the arabesque wheelings of the patient buzzards. Jews pass Columbus in long columns, but the tragedy of their expulsion makes no mark on him. Somebody tries to sell him a Toledo sword; he waves the man away. Having lost his own dreams of ships, Columbus leaves the Jews to the ships of their exile, waiting in the harbor of Cadiz. Exhaustion strips him of his senses. This old world is too old and the new world is an unfound land.

"The loss of money and patronage,"



“Out? What are you, blind?”

Columbus says, “is as bitter as unrequited love.”

He walks beyond fatigue, beyond the limits of endurance and the frontiers of self, and somewhere along this path he loses his balance, falls off the edge of his sanity, and out here beyond his mind’s rim he sees, for the first and only time in his life, a vision.

It’s a dream of a dream. He dreams of Isabella, languidly exploring the Alhambra, the great jewel she has seized from Boabdil, last of the Nasrids. She is staring into a large stone bowl held aloft by stone lions. The bowl is filled with blood, and in it she sees (Columbus dreams her seeing) a vision of her own.

The bowl shows her that everything, all the known world, is now hers; everyone in it is in her hands, to do with as she pleases. And when she understands this (Columbus dreams) the blood at once congeals, becoming a thick and verminous sludge. Whereupon the Isabella of Columbus’s weary, but also vengeful, imaginings is shaken to her very marrow by the realization that she will never, *never*, NEVER! be satisfied by the possession of the known. Only the unknown, perhaps even the unknowable, can satisfy her. And at once she remembers Columbus (he envisions her remembering him), the invisible man who dreams of entering the invisible world, the unknown and perhaps even unknowable world beyond the edge of things, beyond the stone bowl of the everyday, beyond the thick blood of the sea. Columbus in this bitter dream makes Isabella see the truth at last, makes her accept that her need for him is as great as his for her. Yes! She knows it now! She must must must give him the money, the ships, anything, and he must must must carry her flag and her favor beyond the end of the end of the earth, into exaltation and immortality, linking her to him forever with bonds far harder to dissolve than those of any mortal love, the harsh and deifying ties of history.

“Consummation.”

Isabella, in Columbus’s savage dream, tears her hair, runs from the Court of the Lions, screams for her heralds. “Find him,” she commands. But Columbus in his dream refuses to be found. He wraps around himself the dusty patchwork cloak of his invisibility, and the heralds gallop hither and yon in vain. Isabella screeches, beseeches, implores.

Bitch, bitch! How do you like it now? Columbus sneers. By absenting himself from her court, by this final and suicidal invisibility, he has denied her her heart’s desire. Serves her right. Bitch! She murdered his hopes, didn’t she? Well, then. In doing so she has laid herself low as well. Poetic justice. Fair’s fair.

At the dream’s end he permits her messengers to find him. Their hoofbeats, their waving frantic arms. They plead, cajole, offer bribes. But it’s too late. Only the sweet self-lacerating joy of murdering possibility remains. He answers the heralds: a shake of the head. *No.*

HE comes to his senses. He is on his knees in the fertility of the plains, waiting for death. He hears the hoofbeats approaching and raises his eyes, half expecting to see the exterminating angel, riding toward him like a conqueror. Its black wings, the boredom on its face.

Isabella’s heralds surround him. They offer him food, drink, a horse.

“Good news!” they shout. “The Queen has summoned you. Your voyage: wonderful news. She saw a vision, and it scared her.”

All her dreams are prophecies.

“She ran from the Court of the Lions, shouting for you,” the heralds report. “She will send you beyond the stone bowl of the known world, beyond the thick blood of the sea. She’s waiting for you in Santa Fé. You must come at once.”

He stands up, like a requited lover, like a groom on his wedding day. He opens his mouth, and what almost spills out is the bitter refusal: no.

“Yes,” he tells the heralds. *Yes. I’ll come.*

—Salman Rushdie

NO PLACE

NIGHT, dark night, the landscape outside the bus window like a night sea, endless, featureless, except for the bushes—unwieldy shapes that looked like animals, strange animals in a strange land, a silence throughout. Then towns with high, turreted walls, battlements, and, further along, shacks in which men sat in Biblical robes, the light from the braziers showing their taut faces, their gaunt mahogany limbs. The women were behind veils, veiled; the goats asleep and out of sight. Crushed oranges covered the ground, oranges to trample like rotted potatoes. The fire-lit earth was brown and ochre, sinuous, winding, barren, and the buildings were of earth, houses and landscape one of a piece—a strange, parched land. There were cacti, too, dark now by night but turquoise by day, paws splayed like prongs, a pronged welcome and an emptiness that prefigured the greater vastness of the desert, the spectre of which haunted the landscape and crept inside the bus, making the lining of her jacket that little bit colder.

"Sand and silence and us," Duncan had said. What a long way to go to consummate their love, their stuttering embraces. He had said many things on those mornings after the parties when he wakened flinching, asking where all the lilies had gone, and holding her, his grasp so strong, so compact, that it was like being pressed and prisoned inside a pod. The parties, the sprees, had become regular Saturday-night events at her house in London, with strangers, friends, hangers-on, people telling her she had been an Aquarius in a previous life, people throwing the I Ching to probe their destinies, others bent reverently over the felled mirror to take their lines of cocaine as if it were Communion, and she, too, entering into it all, breaking the fetters of duty and propriety that had held her down till then. She even looked different now, more daring. In dreams there were warnings that in daylight she ignored. In one dream she saw those Saturday people, their papier-mâché faces turning to an ochre powder, and her kitchen in flames. It was all for Duncan, in whose presence she felt elations, heard utterances that kept her hopes on fire. Her two children were in boarding school, and she had put the minute-to-minute contemplation of them aside, almost like putting something, an ornament, high up on a shelf. Their letters became more inquiring and, in their separate ways, more suspicious. Why hadn't she written, was she ill, and was the problem with her landlord sorted out. Then an outburst from Paddy, the elder: "I am a pauper. I have only one pair of pajamas and I have been wearing them for the last three weeks." His brother had got times of Sunday trains in case she should change her plans and decide to visit. Yes, they suspected.

"How to paint skies," Duncan had said on one of those mornings when they rocked back and forth, embracing, saying nonsensical things to each other as he described first the desert in Arizona—the sheer fucking formidableness of it—then the toy theatres that he had made from matchboxes as a child. The desert and the theatre, his two passions.

"We mustn't fall in love," he said often, and she pretended to agree.

"Where will we sleep?" she said, a thrill in her voice as he proposed the journey to Morocco for a few days.

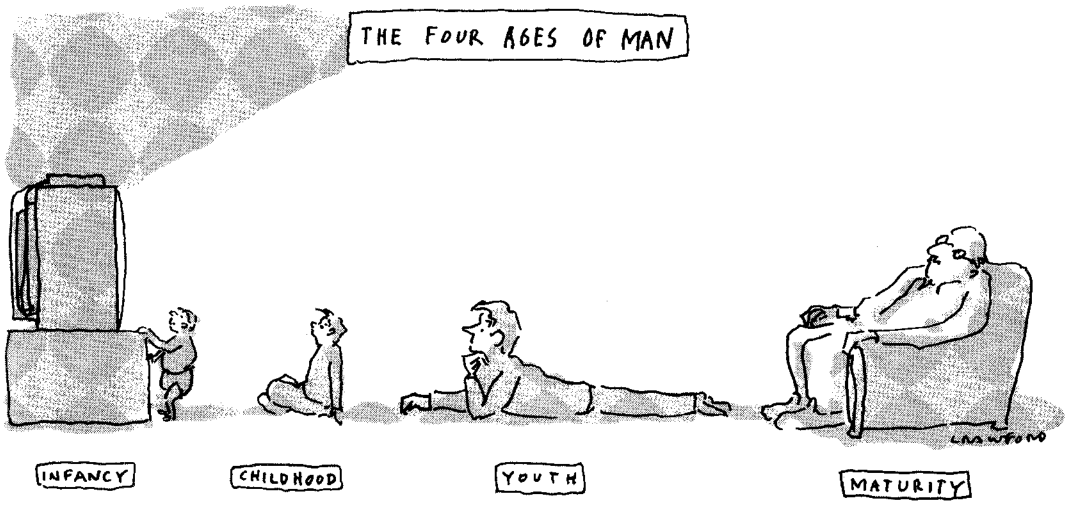
"We'll sleep in the sand. I'll make a sand castle over you," he said, and kissed her to seal their tryst.

She did not tell her children that she was going away with a man; she said it was something to do with work and saw by their eyes that they disbelieved her. It was in the café not far from the school—a wet Sunday, and their wool duffel coats giving off a half-wet, sourish smell. At other tables there were other children and parents, and everywhere there were little huffs as needs were voiced.

Half awake in the bumpy, trundling bus, she saw the corrugated shacks on the outside of the town, biscuit boxes enclosing families in front of fires, their graven faces lurid in the flames. It was raining. The rain had followed her. Duncan would be in his own house now, the attic room—the navy-blue blind drawn, the dark tassel soft as a bat hanging limply over the sill, his unpacked bag on the floor, half unzipped. Oh, the lurch, the relived lurch as the customs officer studied Duncan's passport, then said, "Can you step to one side, sir?," holding on to the passport; Duncan and she both knew at once that it had expired. First, he smiled his amber smile, tried to ogle the man, said a temporary visa would do—anything, a piece of headed paper; then he scowled when he saw he was getting nowhere, resorted to his pugilist tactics, said they were all the same fuckin' bureaucrat bullshitters, and then, walking back through the turnstile, his blue canvas bag bumping on his enraged back as he muttered to himself, he turned and said, "Keep the home fires burning, sister."

She went on ahead, a bit downcast, with a sinking such as in childhood when you are promised something that does not happen but you wait, long after, believing that it will. This was different—he was coming, he was.

At the hotel all was commotion, people spilling out of the coach, crumpled, shouting descriptions of their luggage, porters, in long robes, darting about tending to these clamors, a certain glinting canniness in their eyes,



eyes narrow as pincers. Pathways were lit with lanterns leading to the various bungalows scattered throughout, and in one of these she would set herself down and wait for him. In a way it was more exciting to have come on ahead; she could welcome him to their abode, their temporary home, before they set out for the desert. They would find nomads down in the town, make friends with them, barter with them, because, as he said, "Only two morons would venture the desert alone."

THE hotel lobby was sumptuousness itself, a series of dusky salons, the light from ovoids of brass shedding on tables and tapestries and carpets and on dried skins that hung from the ceiling like gigantic flypapers, while all around a gaggle of voices shouted their needs, asking which bungalow and if their fires were lit and if there would be supper. All seeking, seeking—she, too, except that she maintained a kind of meekness. If he were with her now he would squeeze her hand and she would not be so apprehensive surrounded by these know-all voices and the ravelled skins impregnated with the ghosts of the animals they once were. The porters' smiles were both ingratiating and cutting.

Her own bungalow was a distance away, at the end of a crescent of low, pink houses. Each house and balcony was smothered with swags of bougainvillea, their purple made vivid by the artificial lighting. Did she have to be so far away from the reception, from the hub, from the salons with those colanders of light? For a moment she thought of rushing back and asking for a room closer but instead followed obediently. Two men walked rapidly ahead, one carrying her luggage and the other bearing a huge tray with a cloche over it, which contained her supper. Her room was a palace, the low bed like a fairy dais under the canopy of ceiling painted in festive colors and everywhere bowls of fruit and bowls of roses, and the same colanders of light gave a dusk glow so that the effect was like stepping into a painted caravan. Logs were piled on the hearth, and kindling—brown tendrils, thin as whiskers. The two waiters left, and, once alone, she began to gabble, as if Duncan were there, and ate her supper walking about. Her terrace showed onto a field, beyond which was a range of dark mountains that looked unearthly, like another kingdom, the Kingdom of the Gods. The closed red petals of the hibiscus flowers jutted like the beaks of birds, but were soft as the finger of a glove. She touched them; she touched everything, knowing she would not sleep, would not rest until he arrived.

THE LUMENS

He is better, he is dying a little more slowly,
his skin gleams like wet silver,
he tilts his face up to me and it
flushes faintly rose, like a tray
reflecting the flowers it holds. They have drained
the blood out of his body and replaced it
with fresh blood from the people of Redwood City,
they have washed his hair and it lifts in a slow
wave above his brow. They shave him
and he glistens more, his skin is glossy,
he puts on his silver reading glasses and he
glitters, he lifts his eyelids and mild
sluices of light come out of his eyes.
It is frightening to see how much light
this night man has had in him,
but we are not frightened. Luminous,
he sits up for minutes at a time and jokes,
we laugh, the nurses come in and each has
a lumen around her folded cap, each
particle of air is capped with light
and he does not snuff it—before he dies,
my father dies as an extinguisher, for
minutes at a time he shines before he dies.

—SHARON OLDS

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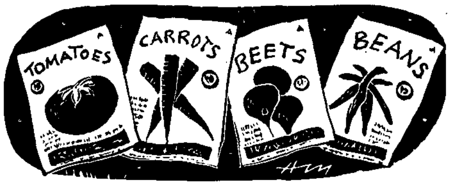
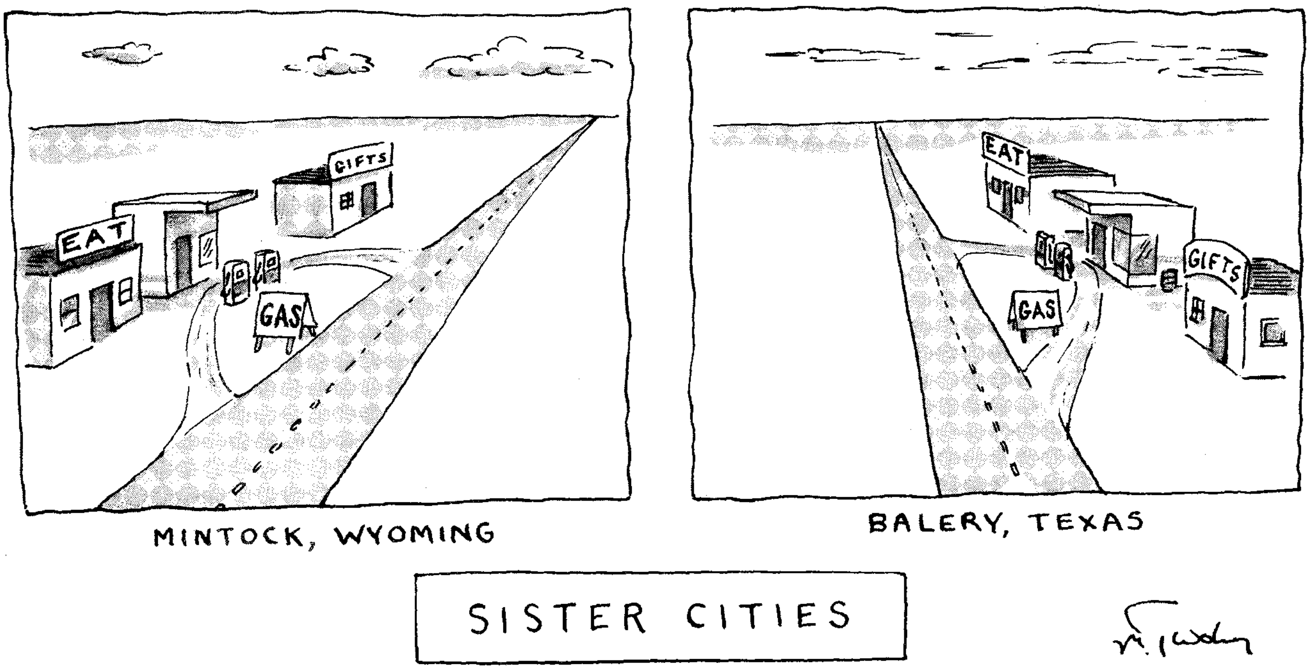
IN the morning the mountains were white, a sheer white as if salted, and in between the crests of salt she could just see vents of blue. The mountains, too, were waiting for him. The gardens blazed with color and chirruped with bird song. Bougainvillea hung from the trees in great boastful dips, and the birds swung from it, asserting their gaiety. The birds were everywhere—calling, screeching, swaying, some picking the feathers of their offspring, others raising their rears to squitter—a riot of sound and song, a glut of nature in contrast to the thin bodies, the unfed faces, and the procuring eyes. Workmen in long, bleached-blue robes raked the field free of cut grass, and as she ate her breakfast she watched them. They loaded the sweepings onto a litter, made of sacking, which was on four poles, and a man thin as a pole stood sentinel at each corner. They worked in silence or near silence. She gorged. She ate things she had never eaten before—fruits that were sliced like bread, pancakes soaked in a sweet, viscous syrup. Once the men had filled the litter, they carried it across to a cart where a young boy held the reins of a donkey. Glad of his moment, the boy let out some sort of yodel and set off at a gallop, then slowed as the donkey's forelegs got bogged down in the wet field. The rain had ceased now, and in the brilliant sunshine everything trembled; small drops of rain on the saucer-shaped leaves sat like melted diamonds. She had her first moment of doubt but cast it aside, like throwing crumbs for the birds. Yet in the gardens she felt on edge—they were too luxurious, too clotted. The stamens of the Easter lilies were the sulfurous tips of matches waiting to be struck, and the palm fronds were Spanish combs ready to scrape scalp and hair. Waiting. She must wait the way nature waited. He would arrive at the same





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time of night that she had, make the same bumpy journey on the coach, see the barren land and feel its chill, see the bushes and the paws of cacti, allowing the strangeness to sift into him, so it would be as wanderers that they would meet in their little caravan.

THE town looked quite different in the morning, showed up in all its glaring poverty—no castles, no grand emporiums, no vista of steps leading to pyramids, but rather a humble coral-colored mosque in need of paint and a marketplace with a pitiful array of household things. The narrow streets were crammed with men, picking their steps between the puddles, their shins bare and bony as they raised their robes. Veiled women stood behind trestle tables selling things, mostly dates—brown and caramel-colored, a host of flies on each batch. Occasionally one of the women shook a plastic rattle to disperse the pests, and they gathered on a neighboring box of dates only to be dispersed again at the sight of a customer. Everywhere there was a hunger, a fasting in the eyes, and a knowledge that this fasting would not end.

When she stopped to buy toothpaste, she met with gestures from a woman who tried to sell her a saucepan and some Brillo pads, so, rather foolishly, she began to explain that she was staying in a hotel. Young boys hung about, insisting that they were her escorts, promising to get her souvenirs at special prices. She didn't want souvenirs, she didn't want these escorts, but, as with the flies, she had no sooner got rid of one incumbent than another popped up, smiling his habitual smile. They all looked alike. She hated herself for thinking they all looked alike.

"Fill your eyes, fill your eyes," they would say, in some attempt at bravura or maybe flirtation. She saw brass lamps and embroideries (humbler versions of the ones in the hotel), Koran cases, bags, pouches, skins bristling in the heat, giving off a faintly foul smell. She saw knuckles of amber that she longed to gnaw. Owners stood in their doorways, holding their prayer beads, giving and receiving silent signals from the boys who clustered around her. It was divined that she would like to buy a carpet, so carpets were unrolled; threaded scrolls, zigzags, and mythological creatures depicting wars, love, and barbarity rasped in the sun.

"Tomorrow," she said, thinking how she would walk there with Duncan, proud not to be alone, free of their heckling.

"Not now, not now," she said, weaving past the venders, but, soon after, she allowed herself to be pushed into a shop that was crammed with objects, mostly silver, the whole place having the solemn silver hue of a church at vesper time. The owner was so thin he seemed transparent, as if every morsel he had eaten had been wrested out of him, yet his eyes danced with glee at the possibility of bargaining. She found herself bidding for a Koran case. He explained the procedure to her. She was to quote a price, he would suggest another price, and after much debate they would meet somewhere on the raft of bargaining. She had not the heart for it; she wanted to pay what he asked and have done with it. It was a flat Koran case, with enamel on the front, and a hinge up the side that would not yield. She would give it to Duncan—it would be her first gift to him. The blue of the enamel looked more blue than any she had ever seen; it was as if it would melt in the glare of the sun, drain back into the silver chasing. The bargaining was endless. It entailed drinking cup after cup of mint tea, with her having to admire other, costlier cases, having necklaces and pendants held before her, and even receiving an invitation to come back at sundown.

ON her way back to look for a taxi in the square, she saw three things that gave her the shivers. First she saw a young man bargaining for the dead head of a goat, a black severed head with eyes that were brown, wide open, and trusting. The jet-black hair looked silken, girlish, yet the young man dangled it like a rag, waved and shook it at the vender, who was obviously asking too much, and then dropped it with vehemence. Further on, on the blistering cobbles, there was the fetus of a fallen bird, a shred of yellowish near-flesh, drying in the sun, and close by sat a beggar with a gouged face, flies lazying in the cavity. How could she wait on love when there was suffering such as this. How could she not wait on love when there was suffering such as this. In the small taxi she sat back, appearing calm, and waved to people in their shacks, knowing that it was ridiculous.

At the hotel a young boy told her that there had been a message for her. He was the same boy who brought her fresh supplies of roses and, for a small tip, extra ones. He was nicer than the others, more amenable. She ran to the desk, wondering what this message would be. The manager was in an inner room, consulting figures, and as she called out to him a telephone rang; he picked up the receiver languidly and spoke at length. Coming out, he looked at her askance, as if the idea of a message were a fantasy on her part.

"*Communiqué*," she said, to which he shook his head and then put a phone on the desk, thinking she wished to use it. Suddenly, in halting French, she asked if she could go on the coach to the airport to meet her friend.

"The coach is *complet*," he said, with such sternness that she dared not plead.

Over at the pool, she stared down at the water, which in the sun was like shards of mirror—the tiles underneath changing shape, swaying, and the lines of cement that joined them like bits of wet, rotted string. People sat reading and sunbathing, many of them milk-white like herself, but none as restless as she. "HAMMAM—BATH HOUSE." Seeing the sign she decided that she would have a hammam, be beaten with twigs and at least pass some time. The attendant outside was standing on tennis balls, exercising the soles of her feet, her body swaying back and forth with the ennui of jelly.

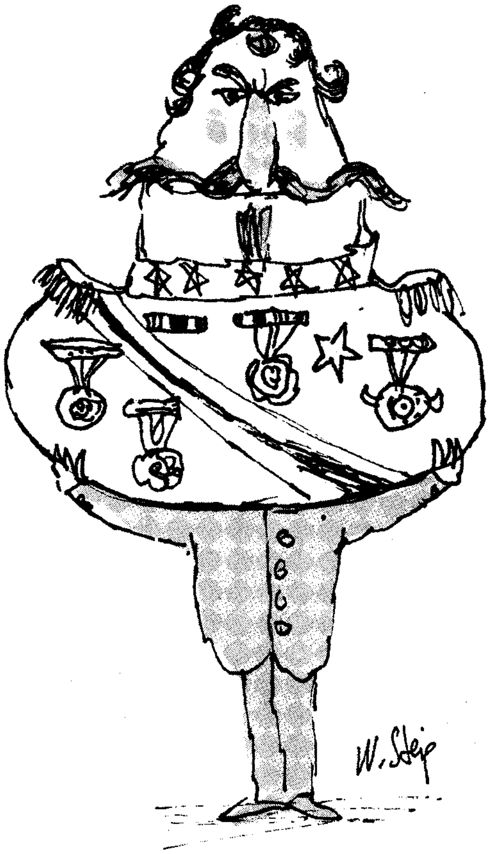
"Hammam," she said, pointing to the sign above the door, but the woman did not seem to want to understand her. Then she thumped the sign to express her need. The attendant did not like that, seemed appalled by such urgency, and took plenty of time before getting off the tennis balls to fetch the little-used book of ticket stubs from inside the door.

"Why?" she asked, impatience welling up in her whole body.

"*Bientôt*," the attendant said.

"Why?" she asked again, and eventually resigned herself to going back over the stepping stones and through the garden—whose beauty now was suffocation itself, made her itch—then through the endless succession of salons, with their foul-smelling skins, to the desk to get a ticket. A young girl in a purple outfit gave her the ticket and said she hoped she was enjoying her stay. It was their serenity, their insouciance, that galled her most.

In the hammam she lay on a burning board, watching the steam run down the walls and form rivulets on her body. The floor itself sizzled. She had gone in barefoot and had to go back to get clogs, which didn't fit. There was no one to help. The board was burning her. Stationed against the wall were three buckets that were most likely filled with cold water, waiting to douche her. But nothing was happening, as the attendant had left. Lying there in the heat, she tried to imagine their lovemaking, the incarnation of all that had been, and to banish the nagging fear that perhaps he did not desire her, that he desired others—those brittle, blond creatures who trailed him, followed him to her house, but who in the end he eluded by falling asleep. Yes, he always fell asleep and thereby remained with her, and the sight of him on her sofa, in the lamplight or in the dawn, always brought to her mind the heartfelt line of a song about a hero "wrapped up in white linen," as if love were, for her, bound up with death. These were dark thoughts and not to be countenanced. Only fear made her quiver, and once they were together she would open—she had only to think of the hibiscus and its surreptitious unfolding.



Egomaniac

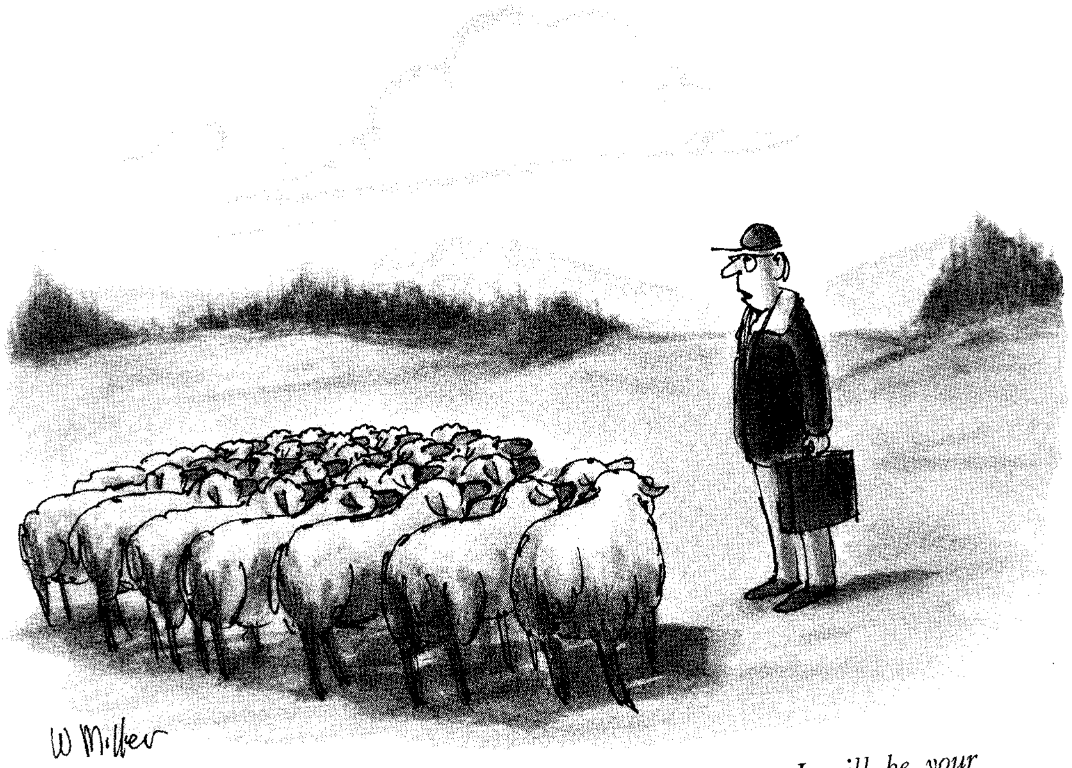
"*Entrez*," she said to the tap on the door. It was a young girl, with a telegram on a tray.

She guessed what it would say, yet entertained some mad hope, some dreg. In the steam she could not read the print easily and had to step outside, where the girl put a towel over her at once.

"CAN'T COME. MADE TWO PROMISES, BOTH TO TRANSPIRE ON THE SAME MOUNTAIN," she read, thinking that from the heat and this news she was going to faint. "What time does the coach leave for the airport?" she heard herself ask in two languages.

"Soon, Madam, soon," the girl said, and was gone. Taking another towel and her clothes, she ran after the girl, to catch up with her, to beg her to help her pack, because in this state she would not be able to do it herself. Instead, she found another young girl, who wore a white apron and cap and was apparently from the kitchen, and of her now she begged, showing such dementia that the girl looked at her with slight shame, a shame that said, "You are not a woman. You must bear your fate in silence, with detachment, the way we bear ours."

"Can you help me?" she said, promising some money, and together they hurried back across the grounds, where all the birds seemed united in one identical chorus repeating the word "Philadelphia." The girl packed slowly, obviously shocked, though uncomprehending of the guest's mad tirade on the phone as she asked when the telegram had been delivered and where it had been lying all day and why she had not had it sooner. Then she slammed



"Your shepherd, Louie, has retired. I'm Mr. Smathers. I will be your grazing-resource coördinator and flock welfare-and-security manager."

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the phone down, repeating what the manager had just said—"Unfortunately, Madam, we are only human and we erred." The girl was looking at the clothes she folded, the makeup brushes and the Koran case, looking at them keenly as if she coveted them. Though wanting to give the girl one of them, she couldn't do it, her heart had congealed. How she hated those mountains now, cursed them—mountains that she had seen rosy at dawn, then blue, crests glistening like salt, and now growing black, a black veil dropping over them because the night was coming on, and she was leaving them forever.

The bungalow was to be billed for the full seventy-two hours reserved. "Shit, *merde*," she said to the manager, who merely waited for her to sign her traveller's checks and then carefully, methodically pressed a stamp on a green sheet of paper. As she went down the steps to the waiting coach, a young boy rushed after her with a bill for the hammam.

"No, no," she said, berating the poky little room, the ill-fitting clogs, the lack of an attendant to wait on her, and then, as she remembered the telegram—its suddenness, its brutality—beads of sweat and tears ran down her body. The boy stood there motionless, just waiting to be paid. Finally she took the money out and flung it along the petal-strewn ground.

"*Malade, Madame?*" he said, and looked at her without pity. She slunk into the back of the empty coach, dreading the journey. The barren earth was yellow in daylight, thorn-strewn, with flocks of sheep and goats like skeletons from the Old Testament, and women bent over their weeding as if they had dropped from their mothers' wombs onto the very parched stretches of land that all their lives they would be tied to. How could she weep at the loss of a lover? She felt, and hated herself for feeling, a wound, a great childish gape within her; it was as if she had learned nothing and still believed in transubstantiation through another. She was the only passenger in the bus and able to rant to her heart's content.

DUNCAN'S house was in darkness, a pile of mail on the hall floor and milk bottles on the step. At the theatre where he worked, no one could help her, either. Stagehands who had been to her parties shrugged, said they hadn't a clue. He was missing. He often did that. There had been trouble; part of the set had collapsed on the opening night and the play was postponed. She wrote him a note, which she handed to the doorman and then retrieved. It was far too supine.

Then it was to the several pubs in the vicinity of his house. In some of them she stopped and drank. She drank vermouth and after two or three she would be flushed with the notion that he would walk in. The drink did that, it brought him nearer, even allowed her to have conversations with him in which she said she understood what his other troth on the mountain meant and yet forgave him. In one of those places the barman, who was young, talked to her and gave her free drinks. He was fresh from home and thinking already of going back for Christmas.

"Home," she said. Every day she put a greater distance between herself and her past, believing that if she could forget it she would be cured of this devouring loneliness. Yet something about the barman's voice, his eagerness, the way he already envisaged Christmas Eve—the candle in the scooped turnip, neighbors dropping in—made her long to be part of it. He had his ticket already booked, a cheap fare on the night boat.

On the third evening, when she arrived she knew he had news, knew by the beam on his face. Duncan was in a dive that was closing down. A builder had bought it and was going to sell it for offices, so a few of Duncan's pals were holing up there, finishing up all the drink.

It was in a basement in Leicester Square, as dark as the Catacombs. He was at a table with three men, and they were all dazed. He squinted as she came in, as if he did not recognize her. The rain on her green napped coat and on her hair clung like a halo.

"I was just passing," she said, knowing that she should not have come.

"Been to any good parties?" he said, as if she were some casual acquaintance, or the barmaid, and then added that parties were the *axis mundi.*

"Axis who?" one of his friends called

out. He was a big man with a strawberry face and startled eyes.

"Shut up, Ahab," Duncan said, and asked her if she believed that the *axis mundi* that ran through the cosmos connected Heaven to earth and earth to Hell. He was hard, like flint.

"I got the telegram," she said sheepishly.

"You did?" he said, excited, as if it were something pleasing.

"The mountain," she said.

"Which mountain?" he said, then laughed, adding that it must be Dante Alighieri's Purgatorial mountain, since it was not the mountains of fucking Mourne.

"Bollocks," the man with the strawberry face said.

"Duncan," she said, as if by saying his name crisply she could induce him to look at her, to answer her. "Could I talk to you for a minute?"

"Talk. Shit," he said, a wounded look in his eyes, blue eyes that strove to tell her something, something he could not remember because it hurt too much. That was the worst thing—she was there to witness this hurt, and yet he was pelting her with words and acrimony. His friend reprimanded him, said it was no way to treat a lady and, rising, dusted one of the kitchen chairs with his cap, begging her to sit, offering hospitality. She sat, thinking, If I wait, Duncan will melt; something in him will soften, and it will be like before. A man she knew named Keith was among them, lolling in his motor coat and so hazed he thought she was a dancer and kept calling her Vicky. The third was very young, very affable, and seeing her nerves he tried to console her by pinching a stuffed fox that was on the counter. It was an old, frowzy fox and in jest someone had draped a tea cloth over it so that it mimicked a waiter or a waitress. The whole place had a look of neglect. There was a stack of cutlery in an empty refrigerator tray along with a ball of uncooked pastry that had gone moldy. A hand-done sign said "Drink Now and Avoid the Christmas Rush." Another read "Think Is News and Think in Loos." There was bric-a-brac on the upper plywood shelf—an accordion, a shillelagh, and some black pots—reminders of his and her upbringings, and unwisely she referred to them.

"Bullshit," he said. Everything about her vexed him. To think that once he had written in purple on her tablecloth, "To love someone is measureless . . . yet we try."

"That's a fancy yoke," the young boy said, pointing to an oblong glass case in which there were some pitiful relics of grandeur—a lace napkin, some bone-handled cutlery, and a dinner plate with matching skin plate.

"It is," she said, swallowing her tears.

"Place your order: bacon, egg, black pudding," he said, smiling at her. With a stick of chalk he wrote her order on a blackboard that was wedged into the crook of the fox's arm.

Not knowing how to get up assuredly was what prevented her from leaving. Everything in her seemed to have frozen as she stared stupidly—at the fox; at an old-fashioned poster for beer, which featured roses and a lit cigar resting on the edge of a table; then at Duncan—like someone immobilized.

"Don't fucking look at me like that," he said. Her eyes moved to a slot machine; it was unlit, but in the dim light she could make out disks of raspberries and oranges and lemons, all quenched now, but at the mere click of a button they could gleam again, simulating a garish gaiety.

"I'll be off," she said, and with some spurt of courtesy, or perhaps it was relief, he rose to see her out. Her body, aching for him, almost collapsed onto him as they staggered out.

"I'm no use to you, babe," he said as he stood in the doorway, with the bruised look of a boxer, saluting passing people with a "Hello, goodbye."

"Why didn't you come?" she asked, barely restraining herself from touching him, touching his hand, which was inked. He felt it and moved away, and she saw the good will leaking out of him as he mettled himself.

"You're a cave woman," he said. "Ball and chain, chain and ball."

"All women are cave women. They have to be," she said.

Then he flinched, a flinch so painful that she thought his temples might just split the way a windowpane is split by lightning. She did not respond to his parting shot, which was meant as a salve to her pride.

"Would you sort of wave to me if ever we meet?" he called, but she ignored it.

THE rain had stopped, but lugs of water deep enough to sail toy boats in swished in the gutter as the buses and cars sped vengefully past. The city sky was spinning itself into a winterish lilac haze, prettier by far than anything in the street, which was a mad gallop of feet and faces, a newspaper vender yelling some significant event, yelling inaudibly, as he tried to thrust folded newspapers like javelins into the hands of the passing throng. She did not want to go back to her house. She did not know where she wanted to go, but it was not home. Cold city. Black city.

YOU walk around Leicester Square and you see slabs of food through windows; you see ketchup and wounded faces, cracked faces, avid faces, sharks; you turn into a side street and you see litter; you see an old radio disembowelled and you turn back and go down the main thoroughfare, thinking you will take your place among the crowd, you will not lurk in side streets; you see the newspaper man again—or is it his double shouting and jutting the folded javelins of ephemera into passing hands—and you see a sign above a theatre and an arrow leading to yet another theatre and you think, Gold, gossamer, the spell of make-believe. You go past the theatre and past a seedy rifle gallery where people, mostly men, are whiling away the hours, and you see in their faces the shreds of their unlived aspirations, and then a bisection offers two streets—in one menus, half-rained on, beer froth, a balalaika in the distance, faint, like a shell held to the ear; the other street nobler by far with a huge stone gallery in the process of being cleaned, part ashen, part charcoal, and then a church, with steps that you could ascend, but, no, the thing is not to settle, but to walk, to keep walking, sometimes to halt at a shop entrance; you read signs about cut-price cruises, then you see more ketchup and varnished Minnie Mouse tables, and on a whim you risk the pedestrian crossing and plunge out with the multitudes, who seem to have somewhere to go. Above all, you walk and you loiter to avoid the rattles and conscience of house and home. Cold city. Void.

—Edna O'Brien

PROFILES

LIVING LARGE

THE coolest person in New York at the moment is a man named Fred Brathwaite, who is known most of the time to most of his friends as Fab Five Freddy, Fab, Five, or just Freddy. Freddy has a lot of jobs. He has been, at one time or another, a graffiti artist, a rapper, an internationally exhibited painter, a video and TV-commercial director, a screenwriter, a film scorer, an actor, a lecturer, and a television personality. Currently, he is also known to millions of viewers as the host of MTV's popular Saturday-night rap-music show, "Yo! MTV Raps." Freddy also knows a lot of people. He counts among his friends the late Andy Warhol, a music promoter who goes by the name Great Adventure, the painter Julian Schnabel, and the afternoon manager of a McDonald's on 125th Street in Harlem. Freddy's tastes range all over the place. In the course of any given day, he might express enthusiasm for Italian postmodern painters, a new rap song by Public Enemy, the oxtail soup served at a dumpy little Haitian restaurant on Tenth Avenue, the actor who played Grandpa Munster on "The Munsters," Malcolm X, high-end stereo components, medieval armor, dogs, women, and nicely designed long-haul trucks. Hanging around with Freddy is a multimedia experience.

Freddy has perfect grammar, but, in keeping with his non-standard tastes, he prefers to use a finely discriminated array of non-standard English expressions to characterize his regular outbreaks of good feeling. These include:

Fly—implies exceptional stylishness or unusually high achievement. How Freddy described the food at a dinner he attended with representatives of the Ebel watch company at Le Cirque.

Excellent—often refers to a successful business transaction. How Freddy said he felt when he found out he was being hired to play himself in an upcoming movie.

Dope—expresses all-purpose positiveness, especially about something intense or challenging. How Freddy rated a new album by the Jamaican singer Shabba Ranks.

Extra happy—refers to a big, expansive swell of feeling. How Freddy described his emotions upon hearing that his television show would be broadcast in the Soviet Union.

Yo!—the ultimate, all-purpose exclamation, which, depending on inflection, can imply marvellousness or wonderment. How Freddy begins a discussion of what it's like for him to consider that at this fairly early point in his life he is already the host of a hip internationally televised music show, has a deal with Warner Brothers to direct two movies, travels freely among a dozen different worlds, knows famous people, and is famous himself.

PEOPLE recognize Freddy on the street all the time these days, but you get the feeling that even if he weren't televised weekly he would still not be the sort of person to go unnoticed. On camera he can look wiry, but in person he is over six feet tall and more than solidly built. He is thirty-one years old, looks about thirty, and will occasionally assign himself a few years less than that in the telling. He has prominent, round cheekbones, a bow-shaped, wily smile, and a small, nearly forgettable mustache. His hands are large and long-fingered and mobile. He is very adept at the classic B-boy gestures of rap—stiff thumbs, forefingers, and pinkies moved in deliberate, threatening sweeps, ending with arms crossed high, shoulders hunched, and head tilted sassily—but his real body language is more subtle. He walks canted forward, as if he were about to lean over and whisper. His voice is slightly nasal and usually amusing. I can describe neither his eyes nor his hair, because he always wears a hat and sunglasses—indoors and out, night and day. He favors felt fedoras and Jean-Paul Gaultier shades. The rest of his outfits have an equally arresting quality—he always looks camera-ready. One time I was with him, he was wearing a scarlet camp shirt with flap pockets, baggy black gabardine pants, red suède oxfords, and a taupe felt fedora. Another time, he was wearing a pumpkin-colored rayon shirt buttoned to the neck, no tie, a string of large amber beads, baggy rust-colored pants, green suède oxfords with thick black soles, and a black silk trenchcoat. All in all, his style is pretty sui generis.

Summing up what he does for a living, Freddy said recently, "I'm the king of synthesis." There is no such job listed with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Freddy nonetheless synthesizes full time. An ideal Fab Five Freddy project involves several media and several individuals who represent the high and low ends of artistic endeavor or social standing and whose association would be discordant if they were not harmonized by Freddy. His favorite version of such projects at the moment is the cross-pollination of black street culture with highbrow art. Some months ago, describing a trip he took to Italy, he told me, "I wanted to walk by Fellini's house, because I really admire his filmmaking. So I took a huge ghetto blaster, put in a Run-D.M.C. tape, and walked up and down Fellini's street, right in front of his house, blasting rap music. I liked the idea of combining the two experiences."

Freddy describing the rest of his stay in Italy: "Then I went to dinner at the home of the man who runs the Galleria la Medusa in Rome. We were getting together to talk about the graffiti scene, and all that. His house was filled with all these gorgeous

DECORATOR SHOW HOUSE

Chrome locks gleam
in my bare apartment. 4 A.M.,
I sit on the floor with design magazines,
stagger through ravishing rooms.
Cold tiles numb my thighs.
One bird cracks the dark:
daylight. I mark the page,
turn off the lamp. My windows float,
fabric swatches turn to ghosts.

Behind ostrich topiary six hours later,
I join the line—
All Tickets Tax-Deductible.
Silver-blond in her cropped bouclé jacket,
the pince-nezed volunteer fans me into half
of a rococo piazza made whole
by mirrored walls. Recorded crickets
chirr the room into twilight.
A woman in salmon linen honks, “That *noise!*
What I *hate* about our weekends in the country!”
She swats her tanned cleavage, claps her hands
to her ears. Beneath an elephant palm
a bronze birdcage, filigree door flung wide.
The nightingale escapes
through the trompe-l’oeil shattered skylight,
wheels into whips of blue.
In the bedroom, smell
of licked skin, split nectarine.
The smoky floor tilts, buckles, rips,
knocks me against a horned figure,
rakes me into the vine-webbed bed.
Claws rasp my arms, legs,
shred my shirt, strip my jeans;
my sneakers tear off.
Mistress of the Beast’s palace, I click
through his rooms on knife-blade heels.
“Think these are *real*?”
White lizard, gold lighter, cherry-cola hair,
sifts through pools of jewels on the vanity.

“Moroccan . . . but somehow . . . *Flemish*,”
a Ken doll chants,
bends to stroke the parquet stained
carnelian, quince, marigold.
He flurries to the fireplace—
faux alabaster, lapis, malachite—sighs.
Hoof-scrapes—
eyes in the peacock’s tail blink.
The Beast’s shadow on me:
my wineglass sweats.
His skin is fur, the smell of a goat.

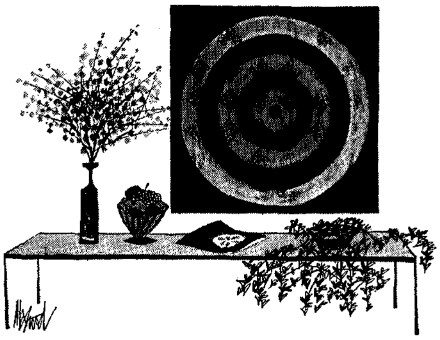
—EMILY RECHNITZ

• •

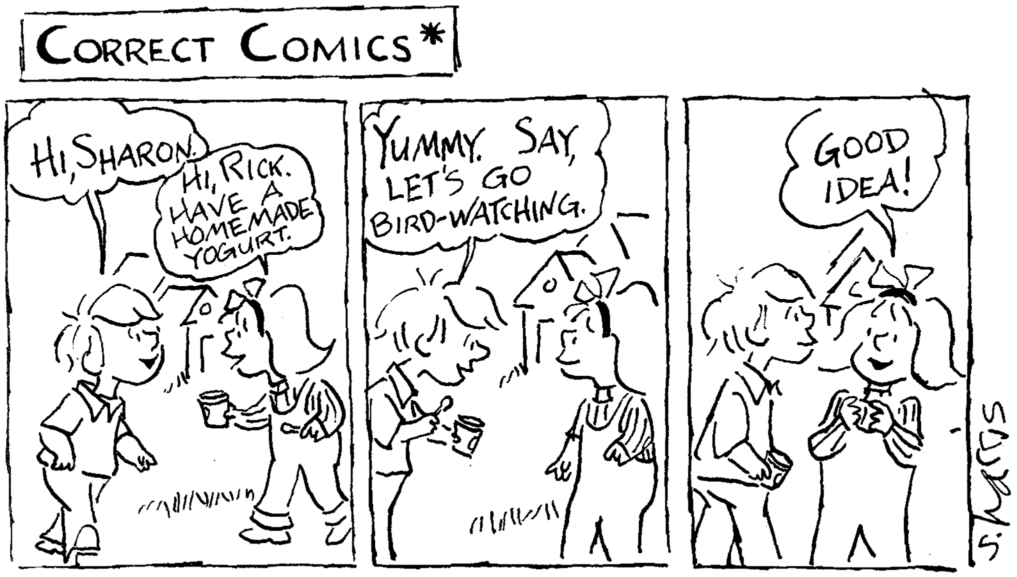
Caravaggios and de Chiricos and Italian Futurist paintings. It was, like, *yo*.”

ONE *morning this spring*, I caught a cab and headed over to pick Freddy up at his apartment. Freddy lives in a modern high rise on the western edge of midtown Manhattan. Before that, he lived in a tenement on the Lower East Side. When he first achieved notoriety as a graffiti artist, he was living at home with his parents, in Bedford-Stuyvesant. His present apartment has sensational views in three directions, quite a few mirrors, a vacuum-sealed ambience, and, to my eye, a sort of Wall Street yuppie gleam, which makes it exactly not the place I would have expected Freddy to live in. As it happens, though, Freddy appreciates good views and slick buildings. He also has a lot of friends circulating in the neighborhood; one evening when he and I were coming back from a “Yo!” taping, we ran into a rapper named Queen Latifah and her manager, both friends of his, in the entranceway.

The things Freddy does and the pace at which he does them make him seem to be all over the place all the time. This is true of many people in New York—and, in particular, of the kinds of people who populate Freddy’s various businesses—but Freddy takes being on the move, like everything else he does, to its highest form of expression. A typical day for him might include shooting an episode of “Yo!” on location in the Bronx, then editing one of his music videos at a production facility in midtown, then shopping in SoHo, then meeting people for dinner at the Odeon, then visiting friends at midnight in Bed-Stuy. One afternoon this winter, Freddy called me from Los Angeles. I was actually expecting him to be calling from Japan, where he and rap have lately become hot commodities, both separately and as they are teamed up on “Yo!” Freddy is usually more than happy to travel wherever he has become a hot commodity, and a few weeks earlier he had decided he ought to visit Japan while he was still in vogue, but apparently the trip had fallen through, and instead he had gone to California. In Los Angeles, he was staying at the Mondrian Hotel, a glossy place on Sunset Boulevard whose owners also happen to consider him a hot commodity: several years ago, they let him live in the hotel for three months in exchange for some of his paintings. Toward the end of the conversation, I asked Freddy what he’d be doing for the next few days. He rattled off a list that included movie, television, advertising, and music projects that would entail travelling to three nations on three continents. When I said that he’d be hard to find, he said, “Oh, not really. I don’t know how to drive, so the whole time I’m in L.A. I’ll kind of be stuck in my hotel room.”



This particular morning in New York, Freddy was first going to a meeting about an upcoming music-video project, then shooting the episode of “Yo! MTV Raps” that would run the following Saturday night, then working on his Warner screenplay,


CORRECT COMICS*
HI, SHARON.
HI, RICK. HAVE A HOMEMADE YOGURT.
YUMMY. SAY, LET'S GO BIRD-WATCHING.
GOOD IDEA!
SIPRESS

* DRAWN BY A VEGETARIAN ON ACID-FREE RECYCLED PAPER IN A DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT

and then having a meeting about another music video he might be directing. I was late, but Freddy didn't seem to notice: when my cab pulled up, he was sitting in the lobby, absorbed in a magazine about expensive stereo equipment. The lobby was busy with people in smart business suits. Freddy was wearing a silky shirt with a pattern of brightly colored fruits and vegetables, zoot-suit-style brown twill pants, tan socks, his green suède oxfords, a satin baseball jacket with the slogan "45 KING" on the back, a small leather map of Africa hanging from a rawhide thong around his neck, a newsboy cap of Irish tweed, and steel-rimmed Gaultier shades with little round lenses. He looked stylish. He appeared to be in a good mood. Upon seeing me, he hollered "Yo!" and then laughed—a loud, articulated laugh that sounds like the air brakes on an eighteen-wheeler seizing. On our way out, he accosted his doorman, his concierge, and various people entering the building by cocking his head and calling out "Yo! My *man!*"

"How's it going, Freddy?" his doorman asked.

"Living large, man," Freddy answered, sauntering through the doorway. "Living *very* large."

As we crossed the courtyard, Freddy stopped to greet a neighbor who was walking twin black pugs. "Great dogs," he said, leaning over to pet them. "I love that—matched dogs."

"Brother and sister," the neighbor said. "They're not exactly matched."

"I love the way they look," Freddy went on, disregarding the correction. "That's so *dope!* I should get a dog. It would look fly to walk down the street with twin dogs."

The morning's first meeting was being held at the SoHo offices of the film director Jonathan Demme. Ted Demme, the executive producer of "Yo! MTV Raps," is Jonathan's nephew, and Jonathan himself is a music enthusiast, who occasionally directs videos for rap groups. This particular meeting had been called by the rapper KRS-One, who recently founded an education project called Human Education Against Lies and was proposing to make a collaborative rap record and video to raise money for it. A group of rappers—L. L. Cool J, Kid Capri, Freddie Foxx, Big Daddy Kane, M. C. Lyte, Queen Latifah, Run-D.M.C., and Ms. Melodie—had already been drafted to rap on the record. The two Demmes, Freddy, and a young director named Pam Jenkins had been invited to direct sections of the video.

Freddy, stretching out in the cab, was smiling to himself. "I'm thinking, Yo, this is pretty *cool,*" he said. "Here it is, right after Oscars night, and here I am going to a meeting to direct something with Jonathan Demme. That's some cool fucking shit! Jonathan Demme, you know—director of 'Silence of the Lambs,' and everything." He drummed his fingers on the seat. The cabdriver turned his radio up. A toxic smell from New Jersey wafted in one window, mixed with the air freshener on the dashboard, and blew out the other side. It was a bright morning with a wind that came in startling chilly puffs. No rain was imminent. Somewhere across town, a "Yo! MTV Raps" production assistant was noting with relief that the day's taping could take place outside, as planned. "It's funny, me and Jonathan were No. 1 and No. 2 for a while," Freddy went on. "What I mean is that Jonathan's film 'Lambs' is out now, and so is the movie I'd been working on as associate producer, 'New Jack City,' and we were No. 1 and No. 2 box-office in *Variety* for weeks. We'd still be No. 1 and No. 2, except that the new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie is out and it bumped us. I'm not dissing it, but it does hurt to be bumped by turtles."

Demme's office is a narrow, cluttered loft on the eighth floor of a building on lower Broadway. It is filled with mismatched chairs and desks, and has the economical look of a student-newspaper office, except that hanging on the walls are a huge "Silence of the Lambs" poster and a photograph of a theatre marquee announcing a double feature of that film and another Demme production, "Miami Blues." When we arrived, the meeting was already in progress. The Demmes, KRS-One and his associates, and various technical advisers had pulled their chairs into a circle in the middle of the loft and were discussing the logistical challenges of shooting a video in Harlem with four directors, countless interested onlookers, and a three-thousand-dollar-a-day Steadicam. The conversation stopped when we walked in.

"Fab," Ted Demme said, in greeting.

"Yo," Freddy said.

"Fred," KRS-One said.

"Yo, man," Freddy said. Freddy and KRS have some history. The first video Freddy ever directed was "My Philosophy," a hit for KRS-One and Boogie Down Productions in 1988. When Freddy introduces the video on "Yo! MTV Raps," he invariably says, with no trace of bashfulness, "Yo, now here's a great video, one of my *favorites*." When Freddy refers to KRS in conversation, he quite often identifies him as "the heart and soul and conscience and brains and philosophy of rap" and sometimes adds that he is "my main man."

"We'll catch you up," Ted said. "KRS was just talking about his project to advance human consciousness."

"Excellent," Freddy said. He nodded to KRS and sat down, reached for a pen, and nodded genially at the others in the room.

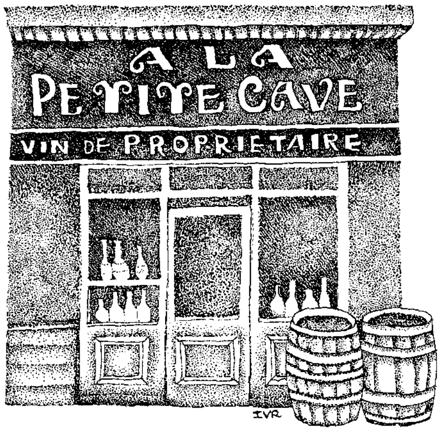
Everyone turned back to the business at hand. I had never previously seen Freddy in any situation where he wasn't the principal object of attention. In this circle, he seemed uncharacteristically unanimated. KRS, a bulky, soft-faced man with a rolling bass voice and a soothing, professorial manner, did most of the talking, describing a plan to distribute four million copies of a book he had written challenging the basic assumptions of Western education. "I'm going to drop the book onto the school system," KRS said. "Our goal is to get people thinking. For instance, we put out the statement 'Aristotle was a thief.' The first reaction will be 'What are you talking about?' The next is that it will start people thinking."

"I'll tell you what I've been thinking," Ted Demme responded. "I'm thinking that when kids hear that there are ten major rappers in the neighborhood they're going to go crazy."

A discussion of laminated security passes followed. It was close to noon. Jonathan Demme stood up, excused himself to go to another meeting, and headed for the door. Then Ted Demme stood up, thanked everyone, and said that he and Freddy had to leave for the "Yo!" taping, and that he was available to meet again as the plans proceeded. He then shot Freddy an urgent look.

Freddy stood up and strolled over to the "Silence of the Lambs" poster and paused in front of it. The large face of Jodie Foster framed the back of Freddy's head. "Yo," he said to me after a moment. "Doing something with Jonathan is excellent. I'm *extra* happy I got asked to do this video."

MANY things make Freddy extra happy. Working with someone well established and successful, like Jonathan Demme, is one of his extra-happiest experiences. He is unabashed about it. In fact, he aspires to it. He started his movie career, in 1980, by telephoning Charlie Ahearn, whose movie "The Deadly Art of Survival" was then being celebrated on the underground-film circuit, and asking Ahearn to include him in whatever he was doing next. When he got interested in painting, he cultivated friendships with Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. When he did graffiti, he did it alongside the graffiti star Lee Quinones. He scored a movie, when movie scoring caught his attention, with Chris Stein, of the band Blondie. People like Freddy; almost everyone he has sought to attach himself to has said yes. The trade-off is that Freddy has a gift for getting himself and his undertakings, and therefore his collaborators, noticed. He manages, seemingly without effort, to create an aura of noteworthiness. His philosophy of career advancement is not a matter of being a successful hanger-on. It's a philosophy that appreciates mastery and technical proficiency but prizes the knack for courting accomplished, proficient people, the knack for noticing which direction popular culture is heading, the knack for grafting one art form or pop form onto another, the knack for attracting a lot of attention to whatever you do, and the knack for understanding that attracting attention is, ultimately, the real art form of this era. Freddy has all these knacks. There are times when I am of the opinion that Fab Five Freddy is the hip-hop Andy Warhol. And, in fact, Freddy's extra-happiest professional association was with Warhol, *whom he refers to as his* hero.



This is the path from Bedford-Stuyvesant to Andy Warhol: "My mother is a nurse, and my dad is an accountant. There was always a very heavy music thing in our house. Max Roach is my godfather, and Max and my dad are like brothers. They were beboppers together—black intellectuals. My dad lived in Brooklyn, and he had a posse of musicians like Bud Powell, Cecil Payne, Thelonious Monk, Clifford Brown. They'd hang at his house—everybody called it the Chess Club. My dad's not a musician, but he'd always hang with all these dudes. Bed-Stuy is cool—it's anchored by all these churches in the community. My parents just got cable about a month ago. Before that, I'd send them tapes of 'Yo!' so they could see it. I grew up about three blocks from where Spike made 'Do the Right Thing.' I kind of slipped out of high school and finished up in this program called City as School, which is for people who are smart but don't want to listen to other people. I was going to Medgar Evers College and I got the idea to be a painter. I'd been tagging my name up, doing graffiti, when I was an adolescent, so that I could start getting known, to popularize myself in the city. That was when all these dudes would tag up their names. My tags were Bull 99 and Showdown 177 and Fred Fab Five. I'd play hooky a lot and go to the Met to look at armor, look at paintings, look at jewelry, and I would think, Yo, *I* want to do this. I didn't want to be a folk artist, I wanted to be a fine artist. I wanted to be a *famous* artist. Somewhere in there, I started reading about Pop art. I was reading a lot of books about art—and some of them were really hard to read and boring and didn't say anything to me, and others sounded cool, and they were about Pop art. I started reading *Interview* and making my plans. I knew you had to have some kind of plan to move into the media."

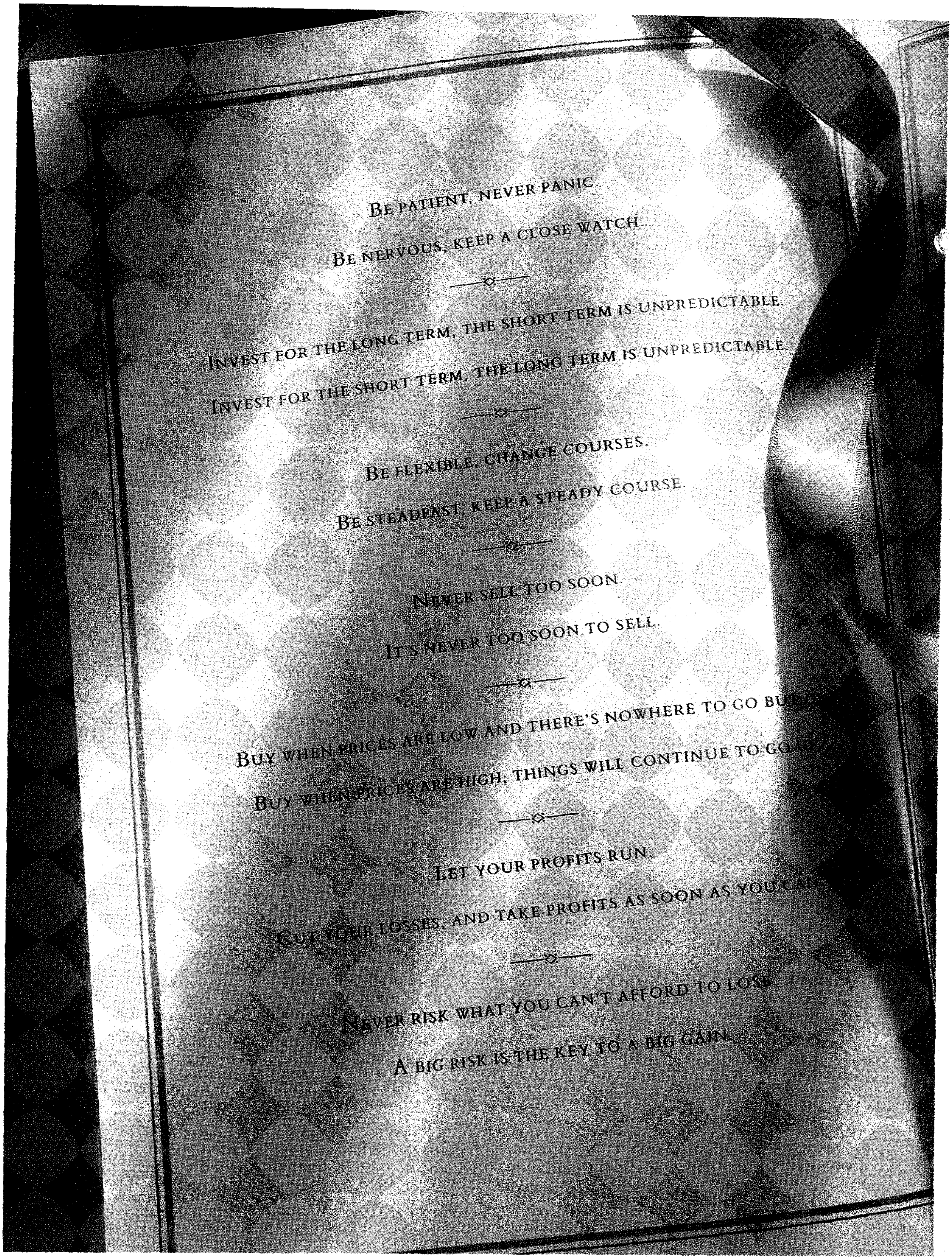
Freddy's plans to be a famous artist coincided with the Pop-art movement's championing of enlightened amateurism in every field. It was then the mid-seventies. By Pop standards, anyone was eligible to make art. Anyone could have a punk band. Anyone could silk-screen Campbell's-soup cans. Anything anyone declared to be sculpture was sculpture. Anyone could have his own cable-television show and invite his friends to appear on it and just *act like themselves*, and the show would be conceptually complete. This did indeed happen. Glenn O'Brien, a writer and Warhol acolyte, produced a television show on Manhattan's public-access channel which was called "Glenn O'Brien's TV Party"; it entailed nothing much more than his inviting his friends to hold a cocktail hour on the air. His friends—among them Deborah Harry, Chris Stein, David Byrne, and Arto Lindsay—were members of the social set that Freddy usually describes as "groovy downtown hipsters." Freddy, who was a fan of Glenn's column in *Interview*, arranged to have Glenn as a guest on a college radio show he was m.c.'ing. Not long afterward, Freddy was seized with the desire to become a cameraman for "Glenn O'Brien's TV Party." For two years, he was a cameraman for the show, and also, soon after starting, one of its on-camera personnel, and also, in time, a regular member of the groovy downtown hipsters and a Warhol devotee. He saw, first hand, the power of being a smart spectator and a collector, and the satisfaction of making yourself and your tastes well known. "Andy was the biggest influence on me," Freddy now says. "I hung around with him as much as I could. For me and Jean-Michel, coming from where we were coming from, being young black males in this happening downtown scene, we were just operating on another planet, and Andy was it."

"Don't remind him it's Father's Day."

Uptown, and in Brooklyn and the Bronx, the notion of populist street art was nothing new, but the forms it was taking—rapping, break dancing, and graffiti painting—were. Freddy would often ride the subway to the city parks in the South Bronx where rappers and break dancers set up and performed. He was, he says now, just a fan, but a fan with interesting connections. "I was, like, this person who understood the fine-art thing," Freddy says. "I was hip enough to hang downtown at places like Danceteria with all these art people, gallery owners, all the groovy people, but I had the pure hip-hop roots as well. So this was my synthesis. I was credited with bringing rap downtown. I went onstage and rapped at the Mudd Club, which was a new-wave hangout. I knew I wasn't much of a rapper, but I wanted to fuse the two worlds, and I figured the audience downtown wouldn't know the difference if I was or wasn't much of a rapper. I knew whatever I did down there would look interesting. I wanted people to see this whole hip-hop street-culture thing bubbling up under their noses."

Freddy's next big synthesis was proposing that graffiti and break dancing and rapping were related forms of street art which, taken as a whole, defined the new aesthetic of black hip-hop culture. This might seem obvious now, but at the time the three were considered separate, transitory impulses at best and discrete forms of public nuisance at worst. Freddy, being Freddy, came up with the idea, and then followed it with this proposal: "Damn, put this all in a *movie*, it would be *dope*." Charlie Ahearn, after being approached by Freddy, agreed that it would be very dope to make a movie about hip-hop. Freddy's relationship with the resulting project, "Wild Style," is a Freddy classic. As Ahearn now recalls it, Freddy initially planned to co-write the screenplay with him but didn't have the patience to niggle over the fine points of screenwriting, and initially planned to co-direct it but didn't have the patience to labor over the details of film direction. In the end, Freddy helped Chris Stein produce the soundtrack. He also wound up with a major role, even though acting happened to be one of the few job positions in the film he had not been interested in filling.

Ahearn is extremely complimentary when it comes to Freddy's contributions. "First of all, he's the best actor in the film," he says. "He didn't want to be in it. That was my idea. As far as the other stuff, Freddy didn't have the focus at that particular time to write or direct, although he was very interested in doing both. His incredible talents lay more in his charisma, his ability to form relationships with a huge number of people, and to have this unique vision of street culture, and to have the desire to bring the ghetto scene downtown. In a way, he



Be patient, never panic.

Be nervous, keep a close watch.

◆

Invest for the long term, the short term is unpredictable.

Invest for the short term, the long term is unpredictable.

◆

Be flexible, change courses.

Be steadfast, keep a steady course.

◆

Never sell too soon.

It's never too soon to sell.

◆

Buy when prices are low and there's nowhere to go bu

Buy when prices are high; things will continue to go u

◆

Let your profits run.

Cut your losses, and take profits as soon as you ca

◆

Never risk what you can't afford to lose.

A big risk is the key to a big gain.

A survey of industry professionals and their opinions compiled by John Rothchild in his book, A Fool And His Money.

The Secrets Of Investing, Finally Revealed.

AS AN INVESTOR, once again you have our sympathy.

With so many experts offering advice, it's hard to decide which advice to heed.

After all, investing for one's future is not a trivial matter. There are educations to pay for. Retirement to plan. The nest egg to build.

With so much at stake, it's easy to understand why so many people yearn for some "mystical solution."

But nearly a hundred years experience has told us there are no "secrets" to security. You simply need a plan.

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We have an insight into the bond business that, in our opinion, few other companies can match.

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All of which are tax-free.*

Which means you keep more of the money you earn (something that adds up quite nicely over the years).

Of course, this is only the beginning of the things we have to tell you.

To find out more, we suggest you contact your financial adviser or personal banker and ask about Nuveen tax-free investments (for current and future income).

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For more complete information on Nuveen tax-free open end mutual funds, or unit trusts, including charges and expenses, call for a prospectus. Read it carefully before you invest or send money.

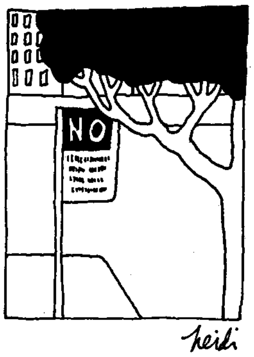
**Income may be subject to state and local taxes. Capital gains, if any, will be subject to capital gains taxes.*

NUVEEN

Specialists In Tax-free Investments Since 1898.

was the one who brought it all together."

"Wild Style" is the story of a South Bronx graffiti artist who has to decide whether he should remain an anonymous outlaw vandal making street art for nothing or cash in and start selling his graffiti paintings to effete, upscale collectors. Freddy plays a fast-talking, cynical smoothy named Phade, who has no particular job but lots of important positions: he appears to be, at various times, a club manager, a concert promoter, a businessman, a tour guide, a master of ceremonies, a negotiator, and a general all-around operator. When word gets out that a reporter from a downtown newspaper is coming to the South Bronx to write about the graffiti artist and his friends—rappers and break dancers—most of them are wary. Phade, on the other hand, positions himself to escort the reporter and act as her agent. He laughs at the notion that it would be better to keep hip-hop unexposed. "You serious?" Phade says at one point, sounding incredulous. "Hey, man, it's about time we got some publicity for this goddam rap shit."



FORTY-EIGHTH STREET between Sixth and Seventh Avenues is the professional musicians' block in midtown Manhattan. It is a jammed, jumbled, slightly seedy street, which seems to generate its own constant buzz. The sidewalks are skinny and sooty. Flyers advertising band jobs and guitarists for hire flutter in the gutters. Hand trucks stacked with Bose speakers and Fender guitars line the sidewalks. The buildings are low and plain-faced, and have unglamorous storefronts, with amplifiers, mixing boards, guitar strings, and computer consoles piled haphazardly in their windows. It is one place where the fraternity of musicianship prevails over the diffusions of musical genre. As our cab worked its way down the street, I noticed country-and-Western guitarists and heavy-metallists and soul singers side by side, window-shopping for equipment.

Today's "Yo! MTV Raps" was going to be taped outside Sam Ash Music, one of the biggest stores on the block. "Yo!" is always shot on location. Recent episodes have been filmed under the Brooklyn Bridge, in the Roosevelt Island tram, on 125th Street, and in an airplane flying down to a rap convention in New Orleans. It was Freddy's idea to place the show—that is, the segments consisting of him and his guests, which are interspersed with the videos—somewhere on the street rather than in a studio, to emphasize its immediacy. It is in keeping with Freddy's nature that he enjoys having a crowd watch him work. And it's in keeping with his ability to recognize someone anywhere he goes that on a shoot he often sees someone he knows—either a friend or a famous person. At the "Yo!" shoot on 125th Street, he ran into Afrika Bambaataa, a friend and a famous person. During a shoot on the Roosevelt Island tram, he spotted Grandpa Munster, a famous person but not a friend.

"Yo!" was the first MTV show to be entirely "remote," and Freddy is irked that other shows on the channel are now imitating him by shooting their host segments outside a studio. "Man, I *thought* of this, I came up with this," he says when he's discussing his imitators. "I hate being copied, man—I made it on my own ideas in this business. I don't got no uncles in the business, if you know what I mean. I'm not dissing it that hard, but my ideas are my *business.*"

Other things were on his mind when the cab was on its way to Sam Ash. "You know what movie's really dope?" he asked Ted Demme, who was riding with us.

"Speak," Ted said.

" 'La Femme Nikita,' " Freddy said, chuckling. "I saw that shit *twice*, it made me so extra happy. I'll go peep it again with you, dude, it's so def."

"Yo," Ted said.

The conversation then turned to the Oscars. Freddy expressed admiration for Joe Pesci, the "GoodFellas" star. "You know what I'm wondering, though?" he said, dropping his voice. "I'm wondering this. I was at that restaurant Columbus one night. You know that place, a lot of actors and a lot of hip people go there for burgers, that's the flavor—it's an acting hangout. And I'm there with Veronica, my old girlfriend, and Joe Pesci comes over to our table to say hello, and I'm telling you, for real, he had no hair. So I'm looking at the Oscars last night, and I see him with all that hair, and I'm thinking, Yo! My man! Joe Pesci! Is that a rug, or what?"

"That is too ill," Ted exclaimed. "Joe Pesci is wearing a lid?"

"Yo, I *swear*," Freddy answered. "I swear! I'm right there at Columbus, and there he is, at my table, in the sight of everyone, not a hair on his bald head."

The two of them laughed wildly and then, after a moment, sat and mused. Then Ted abruptly said, "Yo, Freddy, you have a car, don't you? So this weekend we could peep some locations uptown for the KRS video?"

Freddy shrugged. "I do have a car, but, seriously, I'm not too into running around in it," he said. "It is a lovely vehicle, though—lovely, lovely, love-*ly*. A '57 Chevy, turquoise. It's the color of a Tiffany box."

We were now in front of Sam Ash. So were Moses Edinborough, the show's associate producer and its director; the camera crew; three members of a rap group called Stetsasonic; a scrawny guy with long, tattooed arms who was furiously loading boxes marked "PEAVEY AMPLIFIERS" into a panel truck; two adolescent boys with the avid, skittish air of truants; a man in dark glasses rotating a cassette tape over and over in one hand; and three Asian tourists, standing at attention. Freddy emerged from the cab and surveyed the gathering crowd with deliberate aloofness. His mood had turned distinctly Garboesque. This was a sea change from the Joey Bishop he had been doing in the cab on the way over and from his Sally Field turn at the morning meeting. We regrouped on the sidewalk. In front of us, Moses was pacing back and forth, wagging a finger at Daddy-O, Stetsasonic's main rapper, and saying with mock seriousness, "Now, I don't want you all to be bugging out here, got that?" Seeing Freddy, he interrupted himself, grinned, and said, "Yo, Fab."

"What's the flavor, Moses?" Freddy said in greeting.

"We're missing half of Stetsasonic, but we're going to start anyway," Moses

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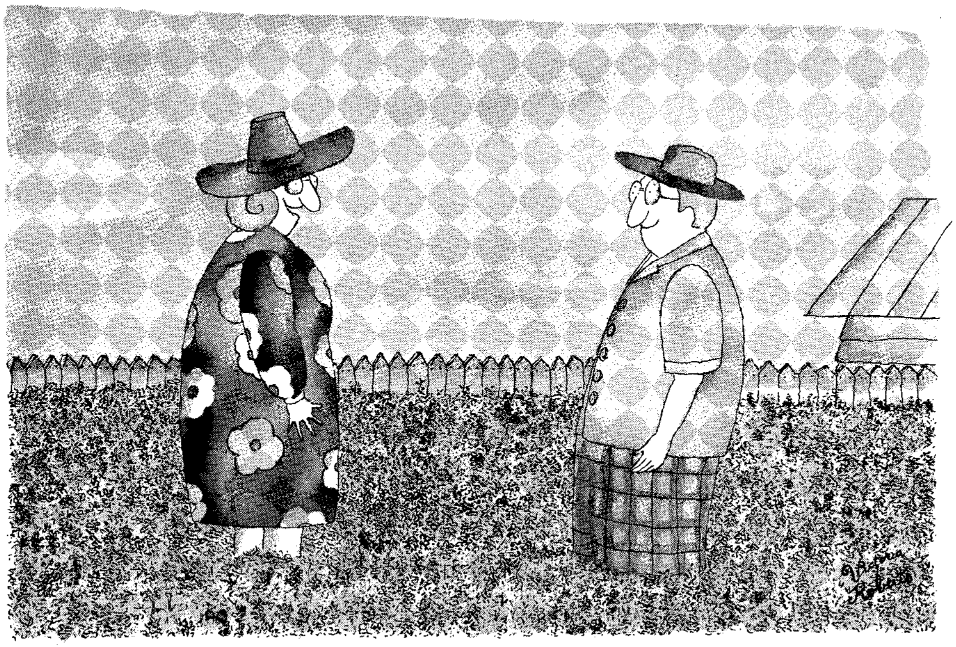

"Fancy running into you in a field of marjoram!"

said. "It's going to be totally def."

Show No. 117A of "Yo! MTV Raps" would eventually consist, like Show No. 1, of an opening (a frantic video montage of rap artists and graphics) and five one-and-a-half-to-two-minute segments of Freddy interviewing his guests (a rapper or a rap group, usually enjoying a current hit), dropped between ten rap videos, which Ted Demme and his staff had selected. The formula has worked well for three years. It is one of MTV's highest-rated blocks of programming. Its viewers span a broad range of age and race. It has spawned a spinoff (a daily late-afternoon studio version, with a former rapper named Ed Lover and the former Beastie Boys d.j. Doctor Dré as hosts). So dominant is its position in the rap world these days that its choices of videos and guests prefigure and, in fact, preordain rap hits.

The genesis of the show is uncomplicated: Ted Demme, who grew up on Long Island admiring black street music, and who apprenticed his way through the entry levels at MTV, persuaded the company in 1988 to let him produce a rap-video special, with Run-D.M.C. as host. Two facts conspired to make this a logical enterprise: MTV had had great success playing Run-D.M.C.'s "Walk This Way," the first real rap record to be popular with a mainstream white audience, and had recently introduced, also successfully, its first programs offering something other than wall-to-wall videos—a game show and a dance show. A third fact, though, was less encouraging. At that time, despite Run-D.M.C.'s breakthrough, rap was still seen as marginal music: ghetto noise that was little more than monotonal chanting in rhyme—sometimes lewd, sometimes militant—to rhythm tracks, usually lifted without ceremony or license from another record. That rap had been around for quite a few years without moving much beyond its small, young black male audience was equally unencouraging. (The one exception was the white rock band Blondie's 1981 hit "Rapture," a novelty rap that happened to include a reference to Fab Five Freddy.) Nonetheless, MTV's programming department let Demme produce the special, on the strength of Run-D.M.C.'s popularity, and sat up in surprise when it drew a huge audience. In short order, a weekly show was planned. Searching for a host, Demme asked for a recommendation from Peter Dougherty, who is now the director of on-air promotion for MTV Europe but was then a producer with the network. "All the time we were putting the show together, I was imagining Freddy as the host," Dougherty says. The two had met ten years earlier at one of the many groovy-downtown-hipster functions that both frequented—something at the Fun Gallery, or maybe the Roxy, or maybe a party for Keith Haring or Futura 2000 or Warhol. In any case, Freddy had impressed Dougherty as being a legitimate Renaissance character and also a bit of a ham. "There used to be these guys fifty years ago or so who knew everyone, did everything, could move around the city with ease. They'd even meet dignitaries at the airport," Dougherty says. "They called themselves Ambassadors of New York. That's what Freddy's like. I mean that in a very positive way." No one else was even auditioned for the job.

West Forty-eighth Street, in a gathering crowd. "Welcome to 'Yo! MTV Raps,' the coolest hour on television," Freddy announced when the camera started running. "Getting ready to hip-hop you right out of your living-room seat right about now." After this introductory segment, Freddy turned to his guests. "I'm here with the *bad* Stetsasonic. My man Daddy-O, what's up?"

"What up, what up, what up, what up! *How you been man?*" Daddy-O said.

"What's been going on with Stetsasonic?" Freddy pointed the microphone at Daddy-O.

They bantered about the band's new album, about Stetsasonic's upcoming trip to Africa ("That's real inspirational," Freddy commented. "Going back to the motherland"), about the video that would be played next. They spent a few minutes discussing the burgeoning bootleg-tape trade. Each week, Freddy likes to touch on a serious subject, and bootlegging has been one of his favorites. Otherwise, the interviews are friendly volleys, a little posturing, a lot of promotion, some gossip. Freddy takes care of business, too. During the Stetsasonic taping, he dropped mentions of having attended Nelson Mandela's first American appearance, of having worked on "New Jack City," and of having directed Stetsasonic's first video, which he assessed thus: "Yo, it's *cool.*"

The three members of the group—the missing Stets never appeared—bounced around in front of the camera and delivered sharp answers to Freddy's wide outside pitches. Nearly every segment was shot in one try. Word is

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that the early shows were rather raw, Freddy being hyper and jivey, a catalogue of distracting mannerisms. These days, he is mostly unself-conscious and funny, displaying good-natured bravado and manicured cool. These days, too, most of his guests are one-take, media-savvy, well travelled, and fine-tuned. Rap has come a long way. It is still a musical genre that requires little in the way of initial capitalization and has an unrefined immediacy that suggests songs written between subway stops, but now it is also a big, profitable, important business. The best-selling album of 1990 (over ten million copies) was M. C. Hammer's "Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em"; one of the top four best-selling singles was the white rapper Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby"; and a recent survey showed that twenty-four per cent of all active music consumers in this country had bought a rap recording in the last six months. More significant is that over half of those customers were white. Most significant, by pop-culture standards, is that this year the soap opera "One Life to Live" added a rap group to its cast of regulars.

Still, Freddy's social skills are often called upon in the show. One afternoon, I accompanied Freddy to a "*Yo!*" taping in Washington Square Park. His guest was a young rapper called Special Ed, who had an Eraserhead-style fade hairdo, a hit record, and a dreamy, distracted aspect that warned of dead air. Freddy was in a particularly chipper mood that day. The interview went something like this:

Freddy: So, Special Ed, I want to ask you, you've been able to get your message across to a particular audience—that is, the teen-age females. What do you think it is about you or your music that's getting through to them?

Special Ed: I don't know.

Freddy: Any idea of what it is about what you're doing that's hitting that particular demographic?

Special Ed: Nope. (*A pause, during which Freddy laughs loudly.*)

Freddy: Yo, Ed, what's the best thing about MTV?

Special Ed: I don't know. I don't have cable.

Stetsasonic is of a different order. At the Sam Ash taping, the comments of the three who were present tumbled on top of one another; at one point, they burst into a spontaneous wild rap. They were articulate and funny, and they never stopped talking. During one of the breaks, they and the camera crew gathered in the back of the Sam Ash store.

"I was just thinking about this dope kung-fu movie," Daddy-O was saying. "It was about this baby who has swords for fists—it was called something like 'The Avenging Fists.' "

D.B.C., the group's keyboardist, said, "Uh-uh, that's the one when the baby's got the super-powerful fists. The sword one, that was so ill—it had a different name."

"It was *ill! He was in his baby* carriage, and it's *whip, whip, whip* with those swords!"

Freddy, standing nearby, was ignoring the discussion. He said to Moses Edinborough, "You signed on to direct a video? That's *excellent.* What kind of bread they paying you?"

"Very nice bread," Moses said.

"Do you have a financial adviser?" Freddy asked. The kung-fu conversation continued noisily behind him. "Because, man, you start getting nice bread, you ought to have someone doing something dope with it."

"I'm planning on it, man."

From behind: "I think it was 'The *Fists of the Avenger,' maybe.*"

"No, man, that was the *other* one, not the baby but the little boy who was so bad, he was so powerful, he could chop through the door of a safe."

The man who had been standing on the sidewalk fingering a cassette walked into the store and headed toward Freddy, saying, "Man, I *know* what you're doing, I *like* what you're doing. I want you to listen to this tape."

"Chill, brother," Freddy said to him, and he turned back to Moses. "Financial planning. Yo, I recommend it."

WALKING through Times Square on our way back to Freddy's apartment, we were greeted by all sorts of people: teen-agers, who whistled and preened to cover up their admiration; a security guard, who looked way too old to be a "Yo!" audience member; a young, buxom, underdressed woman, walking with her uncle or so; more kids. Freddy responded to each of them with a wave or a "Yo!" or a genuine-sounding "How's it going, man?" He was smiling, a little preoccupied, as he walked along. The taping had gone well. It would be a good show. It would make up for last week, when a boxing match on another channel in the "Yo!" time slot—Saturday night from ten to eleven—administered a nasty uppercut to his ratings. Freddy keeps track of the ratings, of the demographics, of the competition, of the number of people who recognize him on the street. Crossing Broadway, he noticed a gigantic Kodak billboard featuring a gigantic likeness of Bill Cosby. The Cos beamed down on the thicket of traffic and jostling crowds. "See that?" Freddy said. "He couldn't walk through here. He's too *big*. He can't live his life. What I have now, as far as fame, is excellent. I'm *known*, but I'm not too known. I can still walk around, I can still eat dinner out. It's not too much. Not yet." Another clump of kids, passing, called out to him. He answered them, and added, "I like having some of this, being able to flex my muscles, but it can be *painful*. Fame can be painful sometimes."

It was four-thirty when we arrived at Freddy's building. As we passed through the lobby, one of the porters, a heavyset man with a grizzled beard, stopped us and told Freddy he had something for him. He led us back to the mailroom and, after some negotiations with a pile of crates, shoved a huge, sagging cardboard box marked "MTV" in Freddy's direction.

Getting the box upstairs took some doing. Once inside his apartment, Freddy put on a Frank Sinatra compact disk and started digging through the contents of the box. It was full of mail addressed to him in care of the show. We were seated at an antique secretary in his living room. The living room also contained a large-screen television; a black leather couch; a low, wide, biomorphic coffee table; some amusing kitsch collectibles; a photograph of Freddy mugging with Andy Warhol; a photograph of Freddy on the set of "New Jack City"; an issue of *Paper* with a photograph of Freddy and his former girlfriend, the model Veronica Webb, on the cover; an issue of *Details* folded open to a full-page photograph of Freddy; and several telephones. Hanging across from the secretary was a large, lively painting of a Martini glass and a goblet. The style was late-seventies graffiti. The artist was Fab Five Freddy. It is one of many paintings he turned out, with alacrity, during his painting phase. "I focussed on painting for a while," he says now. "That's when Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring and I were really tight. I was painting a lot, but when I saw Jean-Michel's career really take off and explode I started wondering when it was going to happen for me." It did happen, sort of. In 1979, he and Lee Quinones had a show at the Galleria la Medusa, in Rome, and in 1985, after including him in several group shows, Holly Solomon gave him a one-man show at her gallery. He had his moment, but he never really threatened to explode. Anyway, by that time he was getting bored with painting. "I got to a point where I was good, but I got tired of the art world," he says. "I was also tired of not being able to reach a wide audience. I wanted to see things I'd thought of filtering out into the whole culture." He says he will paint again, but the painting will be Freddy style: "I won't present it just as painting. Painting now seems small, a little trite, you know? I will come back to it in the next year, and it will be multimedia. I'll have backing from

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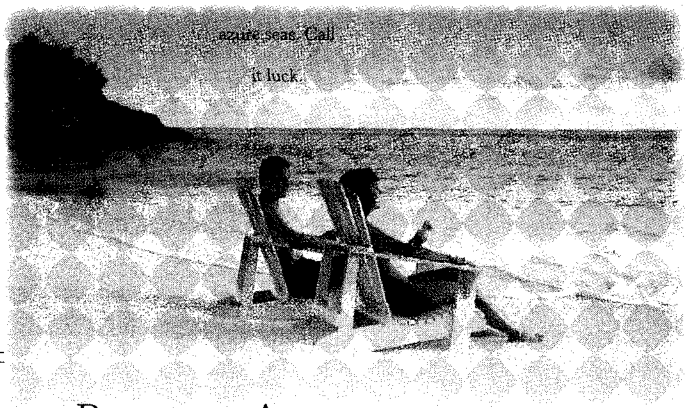

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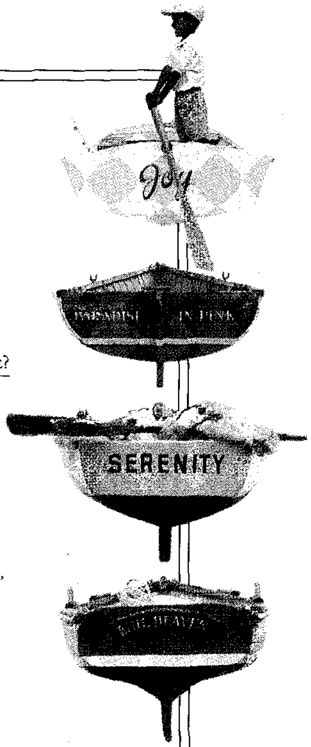

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some major corporations, and it will be shown someplace other than a gallery or where you'd ordinarily see painting."

In the box were letters, tapes, records, much-delayed Christmas presents, a box of chocolate truffles from a record company, more letters, more tapes. First, Freddy opened the truffles. Then he started on the letters. "Here's a guy writing to me from Nigeria, this is *excellent*. . . . Here's a kid writing from jail. . . . Here's more people writing from Nigeria—yo, what's going *on* there in Nigeria? I guess it's time for me to go to Nigeria." He started singing along with "Autumn in New York," and then the phone rang.

"Yo, girl, how you *been*?" he shouted into the phone. As I listened, it became clear to me that the young woman on the line was an employee of a striptease establishment in Times Square called Show World, and that while she was working there the day before, one of her colleagues happened to get hacked to death in the back of the club. Freddy questioned the woman with enthusiasm. At one point, he put his hand over the mouthpiece and whispered to me, "She says the guy who did it was the dead girl's boyfriend. I guess the relationship wasn't going so well, so he decided to murder her." He went back to the call. He cradled the phone under his chin, continued to open the mail, lowered the volume on Sinatra, and turned the television on to "Video Music Box," an afternoon rap-video show on a local cable channel. "Autumn in New York" now appeared to be coming out of the mouths of De La Soul. After a few minutes, Freddy got a call on his other line, so he put the Show World employee on hold and started yelling into the phone: "Yo, I said I'd consider being in the movie for the *marquee* value, but no one's telling me where anything is at!" These negotiations—for Freddy to play himself in an upcoming movie called "Juice"—went on loudly for many minutes. Freddy hung up. Then he took a call from Ted Demme about Mario Van Peebles, who had appeared that afternoon on the daytime "Yo!," saying things about "New Jack City" that Freddy didn't like. Then he dialled an executive at a record company with whom he was negotiating to direct a video of a record by Shabba Ranks. He put the executive on his speaker phone and continued to open mail. The executive's hiccupy exclamations about the brilliance of the proposed video boomed through the apartment. Freddy hung up, called a friend about dinner plans, saying, "Yo, I just got back from Europe, where I was shooting a Colt 45 ad with Billy Dee Williams. I guess Billy Dee wasn't reaching the younger beer drinker anymore, so they brought me in." His friend put him on hold. While he was waiting, Freddy handed me a book that was sitting under a press kit for Digital Underground and said, "I just got this great book on semiotics—it's very interesting shit. You should read it." Salt 'N Pepa appeared on "Video Music Box." Sinatra off, Salt 'N Pepa on, extra loud. After finishing his call to his friend, Freddy hung up, slouched in his chair for a few moments, then abruptly sat up, grabbed the phone, and tried to retrieve his call from the Show World employee, who by this time would have been on hold for thirty-five minutes. At some point during those thirty-five minutes, she had apparently had feelings of abandonment and hung up. "Damn, *damn*, that's wack," Freddy said, sounding sad. "I lost her."

THE Plaza Hotel's Edwardian Room is one of those hushed, dim chambers where everything is so padded and plushy that it seems as if the carpets had carpets. Heavy swag curtains fall across the windows. Heavy linens drape the tables. Everywhere there are little candles, large men, fancy-looking women, trim waiters, glinting platters, mother lodes of silver, and an air of genteel excess. Freddy eats here often, but not in the dining room. He eats in the middle of the kitchen, where Kerry Simon, the young chef who runs the place, keeps a table for a few friends. This is some complicated form of inverted reverse snobbery. The Edwardian Room is not a groovy-downtown-hipster kind of place by any stretch of the imagination, but the chef's table in the kitchen has become a hot ticket these days. When Freddy has dinner here, he is escorted by a delicate, doe-eyed, sweet-natured woman named Paige Powell, who is the advertising director of *Interview* and was formerly a frequent escort of Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat. These days, Freddy refers to her as "my social coach." Paige refers to Freddy as "a forward-thinking cata-

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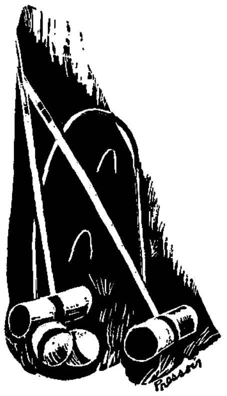
lyst who should have broad-reach international exposure." They are clearly fond of each other. Over the last month or so, Paige got Freddy invitations to a dinner for Giorgio Armani and the one for the people from Ebel watches. "I'd like to see him cross-connect," she said to me recently. "He should get to know these people, so they can take his great energy and use it somehow. I can almost imagine him as an anchor on an international news program on CNN, or something."

Our dinner group was to be Paige, Freddy, and Freddy's friend Great Adventure, whose real name is Roy. Great Adventure—handsome, immaculately tailored, broad-shouldered—had just returned from Brazil, where he had been promoting rap concerts. He is Freddy's current best friend and the man Freddy describes as his fashion coach, for graduating him from his previous B-boy style to his present amalgam of street and chic. Freddy knows exactly what good turn each of his friends and associates has done for him. It is as if he saw his life as a project to which a number of people have generously contributed. Considering that three of his best friends—Warhol, Haring, and Basquiat—are now dead, such accounting seems these days to have particular meaning.



"Yo, Kerry," Freddy said as we walked into the kitchen. "I know this is *definitely* about to be something beyond food, and totally artistic."

Paige and Great Adventure joined us, and we sat down at a large, round table set a few feet away from the grill. The kitchen was clattery, warm, buttery-smelling, industrial-looking. The table was set in pure white, with pale flowers and heavy silverware. Sitting at it, I felt as if I'd been encased in a clean, quiet capsule and dropped into the middle of a stew. Freddy, Paige, and Great Adventure were discussing an upcoming concert in Rio when the first course arrived—a construction of squid and fat pellets of Arborio rice, piled together in a way that called to mind a Japanese pagoda.

Freddy whistled, and said, "This is lovely, lovely, love-*ly*. We are definitely living large tonight! Tell me the name of this dish again. I have to remember to describe it to my mother."

"Squid-ink risotto," Kerry said.

"Excellent," Freddy said. "My mother would bug out if she saw this."

Great Adventure started to chuckle.

"Yo, man," Freddy said to him. "Picture a fine squid-ink risotto in Bed-Stuy."

Three hours later, we were still at the table, having eaten risotto, grilled monkfish, roast lobster with corn sauce, and chocolate cake, and having discussed rap in Brazil, the latest Public Enemy record, Andy Warhol, cooking, Freddy's popularity in Japan, Freddy's interest in shooting an episode of "Yo!" in a prison, the president of Fiat, the sisters who own Fendi, the march of the Ringling elephants through Manhattan, Paige's home town, in Oregon, a pajama party some rappers had had in Los Angeles, the Oscars, the Plaza, Leona Helmsley, Andy Warhol again, the Show World murder, and the various ingredients of the various dishes we'd eaten. It made for lively conversation. Toward the end of the evening, Freddy's attention started to drift, as if he'd flipped to the next page in his datebook. He explained after a minute that he was starting to think of everything he had coming up in the next few days. It was, by his count, about a million things.

"I've got that movie I'm going to be in, and I have to work on the screenplay of this movie I'll be directing, and there's always 'Yo!,' and I got to get this video going," he said when we had finally left the Edwardian Room and were standing outside the revolving doors. It was now dark. A group of women swaddled in mink stoles brushed past us, murmuring as they headed into the hotel. A horse carriage and a cab were double-parked at the bottom of the steps going down to the street. Freddy posed at the top and lit a cigarette. He was wearing his sunglasses and a big tan hat. Backlit by the Plaza chandeliers, he formed an imposing silhouette. "This black pop-life shit can get hectic sometimes," he said after a moment. "It's cool most of the time, but it can be hectic. Every now and again, to be honest with you, I'm, like, *damn*."

—SUSAN ORLEAN

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

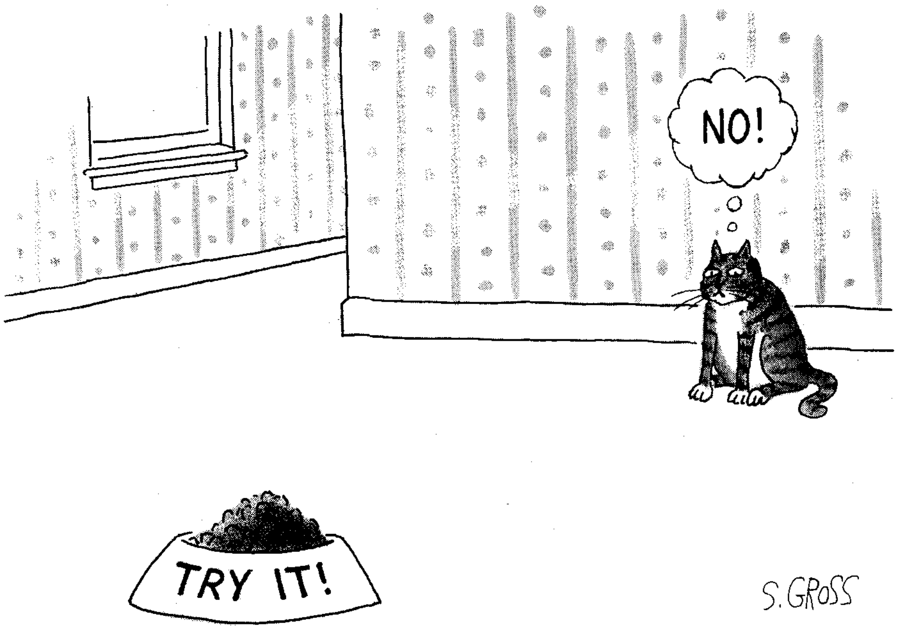
CHINATOWN—II

IN the last twenty-five years, New York City's Chinatown, near the foot of Manhattan, has burgeoned. It has pushed into the Lower East Side and across the East River into Brooklyn and Queens. Its main businesses—garment factories, jewelry stores, and restaurants—turn over at least five hundred million dollars a year. The neighborhood's boom is due primarily to a huge influx of Asian immigrants since 1965, when restrictive immigration laws were replaced by a generous quota system for Eastern Hemisphere countries. Chinatown has also become the center of Chinese organized crime in the United States. Half the heroin smuggled into this country passes through the hands of people involved in Chinese organized crime, which is, according to the Justice Department, the principal rival of the Cosa Nostra.

Low faan, or "barbarians"—as white people have been called since the community's beginnings, more than a century ago—see only the touristy façade of Chinatown. Few Chinese speak to outsiders; their silence is a legacy of Chinese xenophobia and of discrimination in this country. Only by wandering for months through Chinatown's streets did I come to know any of the new immigrants, who are from Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, and also from the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba, and South America. Many of the people I met had never spoken to a white person before.

Chinatown is largely first-generation: eighty per cent of its residents are foreign-born. They come to the United States to make money, and their conversation is filled with references to "big money," "American money," "easy money." Unmarried peddlers and entrepreneurs rise the quickest; many live cheaply in *gong si fong*—squalid apartments partitioned with plywood into small bedroom cubicles, for ten or fifteen people—and are able to save sixty, sometimes eighty, per cent of their earnings. In several years, they have enough to open small businesses, and can afford to move to the outer boroughs or to the suburbs. Many immigrants with families, however, slave long hours in restaurants and clothing factories while struggling to fulfill their Confucian duty to support their relatives. These immigrants become prisoners of Chinatown, and never leave it. Gambling is Chinatown's chief pastime. Every weekend, hundreds of Chinatown residents take buses to Atlantic City, and in Chinatown's illegal parlors hundreds of thousands of dollars are gambled daily, as workers seek to become rich overnight, and gain "big face."

In the eighteen-seventies, when Chinese fleeing racist mob violence and lynchings in the American West settled in Mott, Pell, and Doyers Streets, Chinatown was mostly a community of laborers and laundrymen. The Exclusion Act of 1882 barred any more Chinese laborers and their wives from entering the United States and stripped the ones who were here of their right to become naturalized citizens. New York's Chinatown, like the nation's other Chinatowns, became a tenderloin, ignored by white America. Family associations, made up of people with the same family name, provided newcomers with jobs and loans. District associations, which were composed of people from the same region of China, settled disputes between members, for Chinese did not use American courts. Tongs, Chinese fraternal associations, provided police—though they also committed most of the crimes. They controlled prostitution, opium rackets, and gambling parlors, and carved up Chinatown into business districts, where only their members could open up shop. Some tong members were hatchet men who fought bloody proxy wars.



These institutions which sprang up in the nineteenth century to protect Chinatown against American racism still dominate it and still isolate it. The family associations, more than forty strong, are the social fibre of the community. The Chinese-American Planning Council and other social-service groups that came out of the Asian-American pride movement of the late nineteen-sixties and the nineteen-seventies offer more sophisticated services—job training, legal advice, health care, day care, translation services—but the family associations remain influential, because they provide the Chinese equivalent of social security, a system to care for members in distress and in old age.

The two largest family associations are those of the Chens and the Lees, and they are boisterous rivals. About twenty-five thousand Lees live in metropolitan New York, making their association, which is housed in a modern six-story white marble building on Mott Street, a power in Chinatown. (About a hundred and fifty thousand Chinese live in Chinatown; another hundred and fifty thousand live in the

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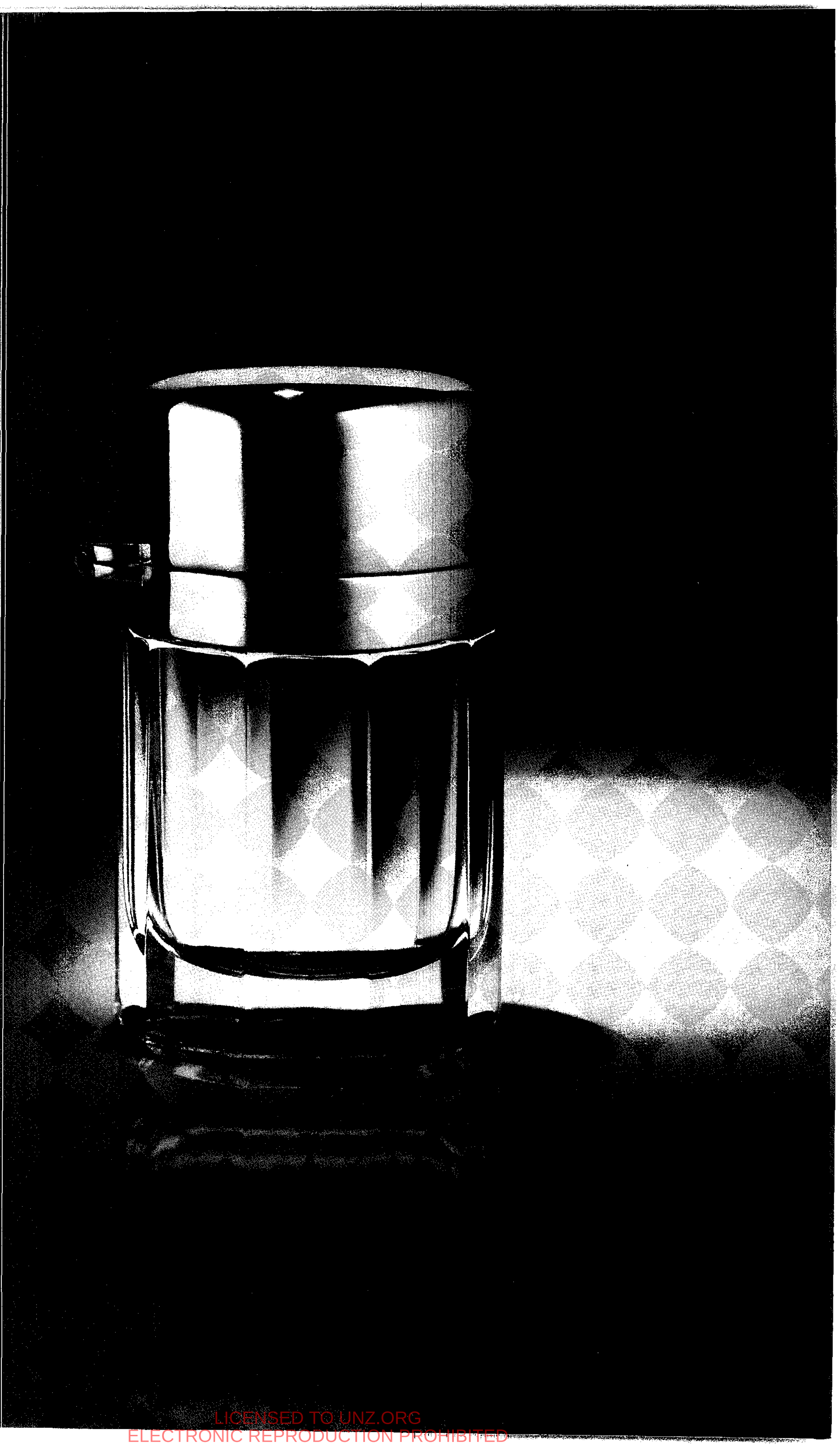

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outer boroughs.) M. B. Lee, its elder and a former president of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association—the informal government of Chinatown—is a kingmaker who bridges old and new Chinatown.

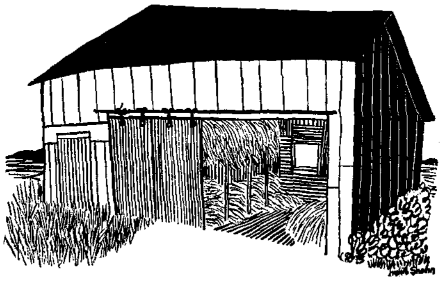
The fifth floor of the Lee association's building is a modest place. There are tables with a few dilapidated chairs, which, on the afternoon I visited, were occupied by sleepy old men. One pretended to read a Chinese newspaper; one was motionless, ash accumulating on the end of his cigarette. In front of a window with some desiccated palm plants on the sill, a man blew dust off his desk before sitting down at it. The wall above him was papered with fluttering orange slips representing donations received from members at New Year's. Lee, a courtly sixty-five-year-old, came out of his office and invited me to sit down at one of the tables. He nodded toward the slips, and said, "We get about sixteen thousand dollars, almost enough for general expenses. This is a clearing house. We can tell you where your cousins are. You new, you don't know, you come here. We locate them. We still occasionally settle disputes in community. Also we chip in money to bury members." Lee explained that since the founding of the People's Republic the association no longer disinters the bones of members, in a ceremony called *jup gum*—"the picking of the gold"—and sends the remains, polished by professional bone polishers, to China for burial. That custom, which kept a dead person's ghost from sorrowing in an alien land, has faded because immigrants refuse to be buried in Communist soil. "If there is money left over from the collection, we send it to that person's relatives in China," Lee said. Unlike the Chens, the Lees do not have their own cemeteries, so every April, in observance of Qing Ming, the ancestor-worship ceremony, Lees drive to municipal cemeteries to tend the graves of their relatives and pay their respects with offerings of food and "ghost money." "If you don't do this before Easter, they may come out and give you trouble," Lee said. "You don't take care of them, of course they get upset." He smiled.

Lee is also the treasurer of the association's credit union. He explained that because many Chinese don't use banks and frequently underreport their income, they lack credit ratings and therefore often turn to their family association. Over the years, such funds have enabled many Chinese workers to become entrepreneurs, without the aid of "outside" banks. "You go to the bank and try to borrow, you have all that red tape. Here I know the borrower and the guarantor."

A stylish young man in a leather jacket entered the room, followed by a young woman with teased hair and high heels. Lee said, "This fellow is paying an installment on a twenty-thousand-dollar loan to start a car-courier service in Brooklyn. Car services are popular new businesses among Chinese. They serve the corporations and law offices, go to Atlantic City. Most people borrow to open restaurant, garment factory, or for bridge loan. To open factory, cost you over one hundred thousand dollars. You buy the floor, renovate, put in heavy machinery. Initial investment is forty thousand to sixty thousand dollars. Rest is installment. And, of course, people need small amount, ten thousand to fifteen thousand dollars, to go back to China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong to get married. New immigrants go back for their sweethearts."

As of March of 1991, the credit union had five million seven hundred and eighty thousand dollars in assets. Last year, the fund made three hundred and twenty loans, totalling nearly two million dollars. Since the fund began, in 1965, it has made some twenty-three hundred loans, totalling thirty-two million dollars, and has charged off just over one per cent of them as bad debts. This is a better record than other credit unions attached to district or family associations. In the nineteen-seventies, the funds of three Chinatown associations were embezzled.

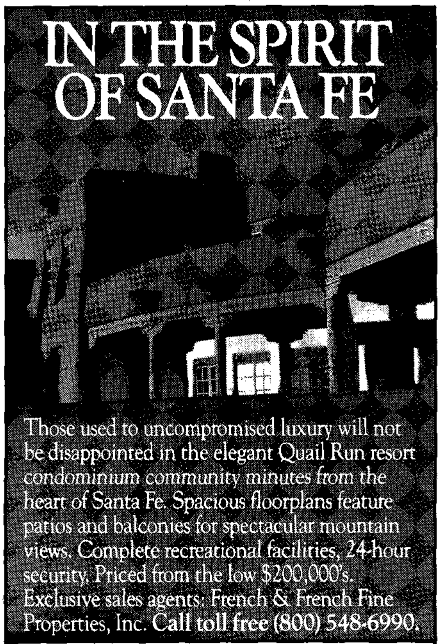
Accompanied by a Chinese friend, I visited Lung Kong Tin Yee, on Division Street. The name means the Four Brothers Association, but it is actually a multifamily organization, representing the Liu, Quan, Chang, and Chao families, whose ancestors, according to legend, made a famous pact in a peach garden about 200 A.D. in a vain attempt to save the Han dynasty from collapse. Ning Fun Quan, a small man in glasses, wearing a dark suit, who is one of four co-presidents of the association, led us up past the second floor, where there was a mah-jongg parlor, to the third floor. There, he unlocked a door and took us on through an antechamber into an imposing room. A long, central table, like a banquet table, capable of seating fifty, dominated the room. Around the walls, thirty teak chairs with mother-of-pearl inlay on the arms were ranged side by side. Several men were seated at the enormous table, talking in Cantonese and flicking cigarette ashes into a large stone ashtray. Behind them was an elaborate, flag-decked golden shrine. On one wall, an oil painting showed the four ancestors who had made the long-ago pact; they were surrounding the Han emperor, clad in imperial yellow. On another wall, a giant black-and-white scroll proclaimed the four classic Chinese virtues: honesty, loyalty, kindness, bravery.



"I have never been up here. See, you are very special!" my friend exclaimed. "This is No. 1 Chinese association, this is tops! You see this! I never knew they had such a beautiful room."

"Our association more than one hundred years old," Quan said proudly, in clipped English. "We are worldwide organization—Singapore, Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan. Costs thirty dollars to join. Annual dues are optional—could give ten dollars. It's up to you. We have three thousand members in New York, and it's growing. Every night, we have free dinner. Old people, young people come here and eat. Our members only. Every night, at least thirty people. Only pay a little bit for dishwashers. We got two cemeteries. Everybody donate money, and we fix them up nice. Any member without a family, we have to bury them. This is our brother. So we all put up money, one dollar O.K., thousand dollars O.K. Nobody ask you—whatever you can give. If not enough, the association gives the rest. We help each other—do whatever we can. Sometimes help find jobs. No longer lend members money. We still settle disputes. We decide what's right and wrong. Our word is law. But some-

HOMES & ESTATES



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times it can't be settled, sometimes members have to go to court. Not always easy." Depending on the crime, Quan added, the association might raise bail for a member in jail. He went on to say that, like all the associations in Chinatown, Lung Kong Tin Yee celebrates Chinese holidays—New Year's, the arrival of spring—with a traditional banquet in a restaurant. And it buses its members to the cemeteries for Qing Ming.

THE Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, to which the majority of Chinatown's family associations, more than ten of the district associations, and three of its six tongs belong, is constantly fighting for leadership with the new guard—members of the younger generation who run the Chinese-American Planning Council. The C.C.B.A. styles itself the supreme voice of Chinatown, though its word is no longer the absolute law it was a hundred years ago. It has not acted as a criminal court in many years, and its president, the unofficial "mayor" of Chinatown, is elected from one of two Cantonese associations that no longer represent most of the community. Nevertheless, the C.C.B.A., which is housed in a building on Mott Street, in the heart of old Chinatown, still operates as a city hall, and new immigrants who get lost are taken there. Many Chinese consider it retrograde, because its leaders advise Chinese to preserve their culture, and not assimilate.

The C.C.B.A. conducts all proceedings in Chinese. It will not discuss its inner workings with outsiders or reveal how its members are chosen. Those are private matters; it is not a public organization, I was told repeatedly by its president, Paul Yee. Nor will it accept funding from "outside sources," although it has made one exception—a grant from the city for a summer youth program. And it will not let in city-funded Asian-American associations, which criticize its conservatism, or such organizations as the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. The C.C.B.A. owns several buildings on Mott Street, and rent from five stores in these buildings provides an income of about three hundred thousand dollars a year. It has only four full-time, paid staff members: the president, two secretaries—one bilingual in Chinese and English, and one Chinese-speaking—and a janitor. The C.C.B.A runs the largest Chinese school in Chinatown, offering instruction in Chinese culture and language on afternoons and weekends.

The C.C.B.A.'s main purpose, however, is to promote Taiwan. It has been pro-Taiwan ever since 1949, when Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island after the Communist revolution. Most of its members ally themselves politically with Taiwan. And Taiwan has a representative on the C.C.B.A.'s executive council, whose seven permanent policymaking members also include delegates from three tongs (Hip Sing, On Leong, and Chih Kung); two district organizations dominated by the Guomindang, Taiwan's ruling party; and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The C.C.B.A.'s president frequently doubles as a representative in Taiwan's legislative Yuan, or governing assembly, and other C.C.B.A. leaders, who are presidents of member associations, are also overseas members of the assembly. For voting in the legislative Yuan and promoting Taiwanese interests in Chinatown, they receive many benefits, including, it has been reported, salaries, free transportation to and from the island, and apartments in Taipei. The anomaly of American citizens' voting in another country's assembly came about because Chiang Kai-shek held to the traditional notion that Chinese are Chinese first, no matter how many generations they have been citizens of another country. And Taiwan, unlike the People's Republic, allows dual citizenship.

In the nineteen-seventies, when the United States moved toward establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic, the two camps in Chinatown, pro-Taiwan and pro-People's Republic, battled in the streets. Some family and district associations broke ranks with the C.C.B.A. and flew the colors of the People's Republic. Conservative, pro-Taiwan merchants became pragmatic and signed contracts with the People's Republic for merchandise. Those without good contacts in mainland China suffered. Now so many members of the community depend on the People's Republic for their livelihood that the two camps are holding their fire.

The Chinese-American Planning Council, with offices on the fringes of

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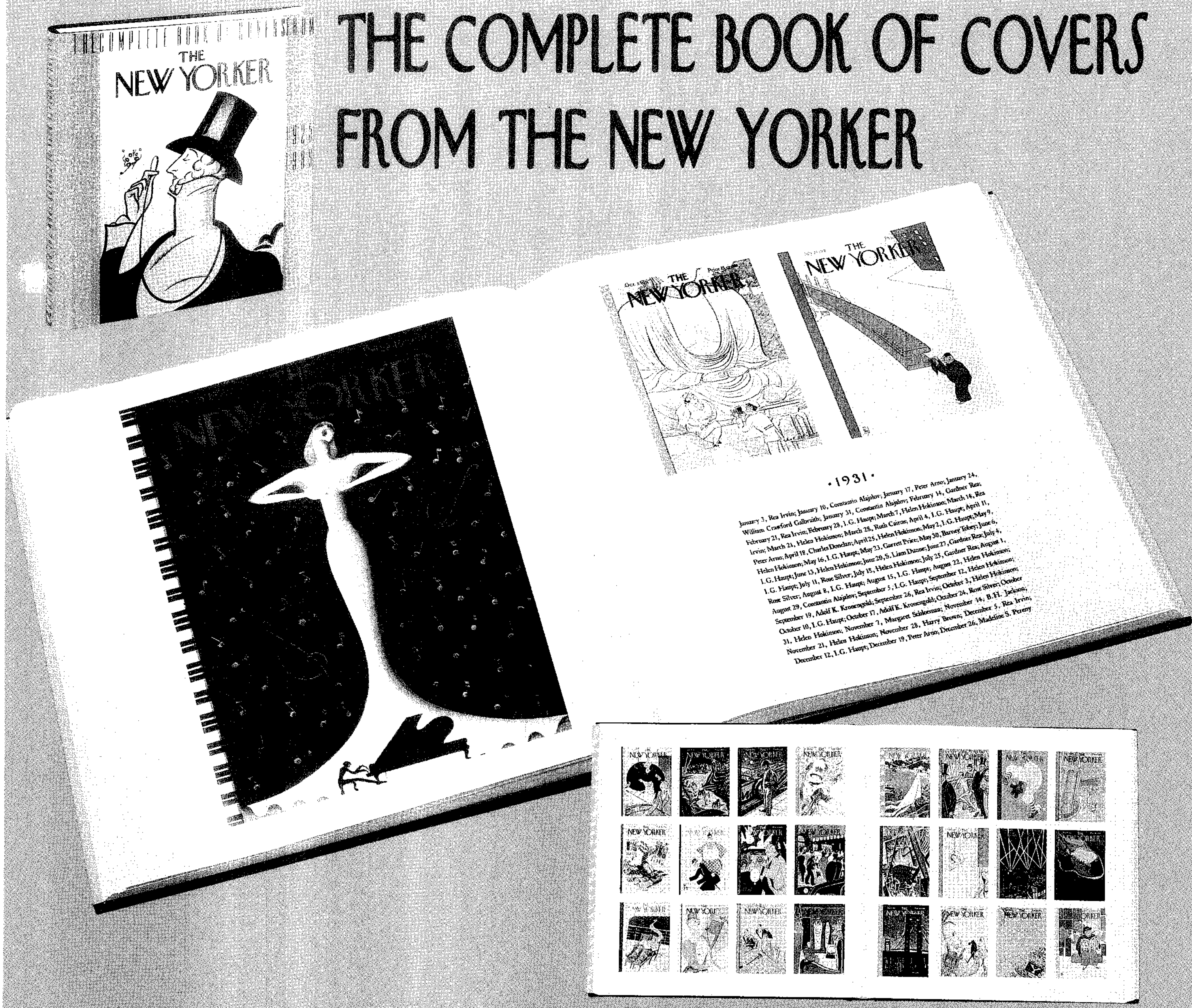

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January 3, Rea Irvin; January 10, Constantin Alajalov; January 17, Peter Arno; January 24, William Crawford Galbraith; January 31, Constantin Alajalov; February 14, Gardner Rea; February 21, Rea Irvin; February 28, I.G. Haupt; March 7, Helen Hokinson; March 14, Rea Irvin; March 21, Helen Hokinson; March 28, Ruth Cairns; April 4, I.G. Haupt; April 11, Peter Arno; April 18, Charles Donelan; April 25, Helen Hokinson; May 2, I.G. Haupt; May 9, Helen Hokinson; May 16, I.G. Haupt; May 23, Garrett Price; May 30, Barney Tobey; June 6, I.G. Haupt; June 13, Helen Hokinson; June 20, S. Liam Dunne; June 27, Gardner Rea; July 4, I.G. Haupt; July 11, Rose Silver; July 18, Helen Hokinson; July 25, Gardner Rea; August 1, Rose Silver; August 8, I.G. Haupt; August 15, I.G. Haupt; August 22, Helen Hokinson; August 29, Constantin Alajalov; September 5, I.G. Haupt; September 12, Helen Hokinson; September 19, Adolf K. Kronengold; September 26, Rea Irvin; October 3, Helen Hokinson; October 10, I.G. Haupt; October 17, Adolf K. Kronengold; October 24, Rose Silver; October 31, Helen Hokinson; November 7, Margaret Schloeman; November 14, B.H. Jackson; November 21, Helen Hokinson; November 28, Harry Brown; December 5, Rea Irvin; December 12, I.G. Haupt; December 19, Peter Arno; December 26, Madeline S. Pereny

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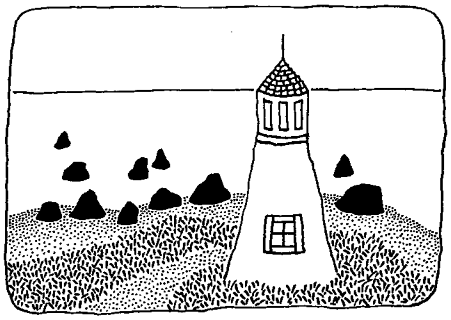
Chinatown, is made up of second-generation liberals and leftists, most of them veterans of the Asian-American movement. Some Chinatown residents derisively call them Chuppies—Chinese yuppies. Virginia Kee, one of the council's founders, outraged Chinatown when, in the nineteen-sixties, she broke the code of silence and argued that the community was a poverty zone, like Appalachia or Harlem, and needed assistance. Kee now sits with her back to the wall in public places, so she can watch who comes in; like most reformers, she is fearful of gangs allied with the tongs that are members of the C.C.B.A. "This was a community of old men," she says. "My mother couldn't stand near the window in the forties, because she'd have been thought a loose woman. The Second World War changed that—after it, we were allowed to be citizens. I do many things that challenge the establishment here. I realized in building the Chinese-American Planning Council, knocking on doors, that until we got political power no one would listen to us. We still have to educate each wave of immigrants. Where overseas did they ever get into the polls? They didn't vote in China or in Taiwan, and certainly not in Hong Kong."

Charles Wang, who is the president of the China Institute, an uptown center for Chinese culture and study, and was the executive director of the Chinese-American Planning Council, also blames the C.C.B.A.'s leadership for isolating Chinatown. "This community, because of its early history—the fear and the racism—was reluctant to have anything to do with the outside," he said when I spoke with him at his office. "It was designed so that those in power at the C.C.B.A. were the go-betweens, and the rest of the people would have to rely on them. Outsiders didn't take much interest in us unless there was a gang war, and our leaders didn't want outsiders to know what was going on. Therefore, few articles were written about us, and no one knew about our problems. Partly, we are at fault. We are so quiet, we don't complain, and so we tend to get short-changed. As more Chinese register to vote, and return census forms, more of us will be counted."

Most people in Chinatown aren't interested in American politics, and the neighborhood has only eight thousand registered voters. Only a quarter of them voted in the last mayoral election. But among the twelve thousand who in June of 1989 marched in the rain to the United Nations to protest the crackdown in Tiananmen Square were many people who live in Chinatown; at that time, too, thousands boycotted a pro-Beijing Chinese-language newspaper in Chinatown that was funded by the People's Republic, forcing it to fold.

Among Chinatown's new guard, the feeling is growing that Chinatown must speak out, demand its fair share of federal funding, vote, join America. "The new generation is getting much more mixed with the U.S. culture," Harold Ha, a jeweller and one of Chinatown's behind-the-scenes younger leaders, told me. "Chinatown will be part of the city—not so isolated as before. Before, it was really, really isolated area. Now it is more and more open. I hope it will become like San Francisco—more open, cleaner, prosperous." Miriam Friedlander, who has represented Chinatown in the City Council since 1975, also notices a difference. "The stereotype that Chinese are quiet and submissive has been broken by their own leadership," she said to me not long ago. "We're going to hear their demands for housing, for city services, for help against crime and gangs. The Hispanic community, as a contrast, is basically set. It is more advanced politically, and more a part of the American system. It has more people interrelated with speakers of English. But the Chinese are developing this now. Yes, the language barrier is more difficult. And inexperience is a factor. There is not one elected Chinese legislator in the entire state, for instance."

THE tongs are even stronger now than they were fifty years ago, and are doing their best to keep Chinatown isolated. They overwhelm the community, influencing every aspect of its life—business, politics, journalism, tourism. Their members sponsor crimes that terrorize and cow the community. Some crimes are the traditional ones—smuggling of aliens, prostitution, extortion, loan-sharking—but now members of tongs also import gargantuan quantities of heroin, generally through Bangkok or Hong Kong. Along with independent traffickers, they have in the last six years taken over from the Cosa Nostra the business of smuggling the drug.



The tongs' influence is pervasive partly because of their open structure: anyone who pays thirty dollars can join a tong, and will be inducted in an elaborate ritual that includes the burning of paper vows; chanting oaths before Gung Gong, the god of war; offering incense to the gods of Hell; and swearing blood brotherhood to avenge all wrongs done to other members and to die before coöperating with police. Not all tong members are criminals, of course. Thousands of waiters, merchants, laundrymen, businessmen, seamen, garment-factory workers, and even journalists belong to tongs. Any member of a tong can call on a gang's services in a dispute. A Chinatown elder explained why people join tongs: "You have so-called peace of mind. You think the tong is behind you. That's the psychological reason. You think also maybe it will help your business: you know more people, you will meet all the other members. As a member paying thirty-dollar dues a year, it's O.K. But if the tongs tap you to become part of their hierarchy, then you have to deliver."

All the Chinatown tongs are national groups, with chapters in cities throughout the United States, and each has tens of thousands of members. The New York City chapters are the largest, because New York has the largest Chinese community in the country. For the same reason, several tongs have their national headquarters in Chinatown. The top men in a tong (women are not permitted to join) are its board members and its elders—the wealthy and influential in a community. Board members are elected because they are prominent: they may own a large business, or give to charity, or simply have charisma. But power resides in a tong's elders and its president, whether or not they are important outside the tong.

The so-called godfather of Chinatown is Benny Ong. (His real name is Kai Sui Ong, which means Good Prophecy Ong.) He is the adviser-for-life of Hip Sing, Chinatown's most powerful tong. Ong is eighty-three years old, a thickset man with a sagging moonface and with hands like square blocks. He is often called Uncle 7, because he was his parents' seventh child. Born into a poor family in Harbin, he emigrated at age twelve, worked in a Chinatown laundry, and became a Hip Sing in the nineteen-twenties. He spent the years from 1935 to 1952 in jail for second-degree murder, and thereafter resumed active membership in Hip Sing, which was then under the presidency of his brother Sam. After Sam's death, in 1974, Ong took over. He was jailed again, briefly, in 1977 and 1978, for bribing police and government officials; in conversations recorded by investigators he boasted that he was *the* payoff man in Chinatown.

Hip Sing's big rival is On Leong, which has its headquarters in New York and is run by the national president, Chan Wing Wa, and the local president, Albert Moy. Tung On, headed by Clifford Wong, is a new group, with its headquarters in Chinatown. In addition, there are Chih Kung, the Chinese Freemasons, and the Fukien Association; the last was formed in the early eighties by people from the Chinese province of Fujian, and is said by law-enforcement officials to be heavily involved in heroin trafficking and the smuggling of aliens. Except for Chih Kung, each tong is affiliated with a gang, and it is the gangs—the equivalent of standing armies—that carry on the tongs' power struggles.

The tongs' turf is rigidly divided. Law-enforcement officers assigned to cover Chinatown, and others working on Asian crime, have maps of Chinatown with streets colored to indicate tong control. Hip Sing controls Pell Street; On Leong controls Mott. A tong member on the wrong street is a provocation, just as it was in the eighteen-nineties, and a gang member ripping off another tong's gambling parlor still starts a war.

"Chinese invented the Mafia, and then Marco Polo took it to Italy and the Italians reinvented it," a Chinatown insider explained to me. "The tongs are the families—everyone knows who's a member. You don't want to cross them. Each has about fifty prominent members. Real bosses, about ten

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each. They post elected officers. If you're a Chan or an Eng, it's quite possible you belong to one of them. Chans or Chens are On Leong; Engs or Ongs are Hip Sing. The tongs run the gangs and the gambling houses, and they settle disputes in the old-fashioned way: you give me face, I'll give you face; if you don't listen to me, I'll break your face. Uncle 7 is the elder statesman of the underworld, but his power has been eroding for some time. He's from the previous generation, and many mavericks have been challenging the structure. Also, there are the Vietnamese gangs—the tongs have no control over them."

The Vietnamese gangs, new to Chinatown crime in the last few years, are greatly feared in the area; they are considered more violent and more vicious than Chinese gangs, who occasionally hire them as muscle. They are mostly young refugees who have dropped out in frustration at being unable to learn English or have run away from foster homes. As refugees, they can't be deported. Members of one of their gangs, Born to Kill, are often tattooed with the initials B.T.K. Born to Kill has upset the longtime order of Chinatown organized crime, because it is not backed by any tong, and because its members speak dialects none of their victims understand, and prey on merchants who have already paid tongs anything from fifty to a thousand dollars a month in "lucky money," or protection money.

"It's chaotic now," Mrs. Kong Kee, who runs a large retail soybean business, told me. "Different gangs come to the store and ask for protection money. Usually, a store has to pay the tong, and then its gang doesn't bother them. But now the Vietnamese gang shakes the store down, and other gangs do, too."

Mrs. Kee's daughter Tina added, "We know a policeman who is more powerful than the gangs, so we don't pay. It depends on your business and who your friends are. We pay lucky money at New Year's, but it's nothing—fifty or a hundred dollars. Of course, it's a bad problem. People is very afraid about it. To set up some business if they know no friends! I just try to protect our interest—not stop it. A lot of people complain, but they never do anything to stop it."

Another merchant told me, "It's cost of doing business here. Maybe one per cent of places getting extorted are unhappy. It's status quo. I'm upset now because we're in first phase of disorganized crime. It's so serious it's terrifying. Those kids come in. We have no one to negotiate with. You can't b.s. your way out, or make a deal. This is new. In eighty years, this is new. We don't know who they are—it's not the same guys each time. We think it's free-lance kids. Vietnamese don't respect anybody. Things are changing."

This merchant explained why he preferred the organized crime of the past, when gangs extorted weekly or monthly payments for themselves and the tongs with clockwork regularity: "If it's organized crime, and one wild kid says, 'I want to sell you an orange tree'—you know, extorting me, demanding a lot of money for the lucky New Year's plant—I say, 'Don't break my face, are you kidding?' I know the management of the tong that controls my street, its general and its lieutenants. To save face, I'll complain to its second rung, not the top. The kid gets taken care of. If I have really big problem, I go to see the top people: on Division Street, I go to see Clifford Wong. On Pell Street, I go to see Benny Ong. On Mott, I see Chan Wing Wa. I'm for tranquillity. I'm not looking for reform. I'm typical, I think. My neighbors are getting rich. They don't view themselves as enslaved by gangs and associations. The I.R.S. enslaves me, not the gangs."

Crime is worsening in Chinatown. According to a study made last year by Ko-lin Chin, a sociologist with the New York City Criminal Justice Agency, and two colleagues, eighty-one per cent of the restaurants and two-thirds of all the businesses in Chinatown are victimized by gangs. Everyone knows who the gang kids and the tong bosses are, but no one revolts and turns them in. Those who do make complaints won't testify in court. Few crimes are reported; fewer still go to trial. Police make cases only with great difficulty. A sergeant in the Fifth Precinct, which includes Chinatown, said, "Chinese don't coöperate—although the little they're doing now is better than the nothing they did before."

The sergeant, who spoke to me on the condition that he remain anonymous, went on, "The situation with the Chinese is unique. I've had them come in to the precinct house to do lineups, and look at the floor. They never coöperate in identifications when we go out canvassing. Off the top of my head, I can think of only one complainant who has gone to court for us. She's the only one.

THE REVENANT

Jet lag, a jump-cut dawn, distempered
Daze of brick dust and rose dust;
Ache of memory, insomniac mumble of June.
The worst of absence is return,
Already not becoming what you once

Almost already were. . . . Forgotten things
Forget themselves; the spellbound mirrors slumber
Dreaming of sand. A shut book dreams of lumber.
You wake them once a year;
Every year it gets harder.

Delicate hour,
Mica, translucent moon,
Hue of penitence (sham) on sleeping windows—
You walk to the borough gardens:
Locked, but a demolished house leads through

And you stand in the exfoliated green of your own past,
Between the pond and the bench where the blind men sat,
Chestnuts plowing the light—domed emerald rubble—
And a rain of birdsong gibbering like a language
You no longer speak or understand.

—James Lasdun

• •

"They're funny people to deal with—they're used to having the government shoot criminals. That's how the Communists deal with them in China. The perpetrator isn't going to come back and haunt anyone. All the time, they ask when I say So-and-So is in jail for a few years, 'In jail for only two years?' "

Nancy Ryan, the chief of the Trial Division in the Manhattan District Attorney's office—she is known in Chinatown as the Dragon Lady—adds, "In fifteen years, I have had less than two dozen merchants testify in open court. Not until 1983 did we have any civilian testify in a murder case. We had to arrest him to get him to court. And I've had just one civilian identify the murderer in a homicide. It's a very complicated problem—the Chinese are deeply frightened. They know there are armed thugs on the street and they can't have twenty-four-hour police protection. They don't understand our system, and they can't conceive of a system where cops know who the gang members are and let them roam the street, or a system where if someone is charged with a crime he's out on bail in a week. They don't trust public officials. Chinese have many proverbs that exhort people not to trust public officials. They come here with the shirts on their backs and their dreams, and they struggle in a way we can't conceive of, because we are too spoiled by affluence. I find it hard to imagine that anyone else in these very adverse circumstances would be more noble about testifying."

William Calhoun, who until the beginning of this year was the captain of the Fifth Precinct, added, "It's not 'Will there be retribution?' but 'When?' Ten years is not too long for Chinese to wait, I'm told. This community is faced with people bent on havoc. It's organized retribution."

In one of the latest instances, in the spring of 1990, a beauty-shop worker and her boyfriend were murdered and their bodies dumped on an estate on Long Island. The woman, a former Miss Chinatown and a former girlfriend of a gang leader, had testified five years earlier in a gang-related trial in Brooklyn.

CHINATOWN has four Chinese-language daily newspapers, but most of them don't report such crimes. Journalism in Chinatown is a warped, submissive creature, as ineffective as it is in China. Journalists risk firings and death threats for reporting the news. Ying Chan, who has been one of Chinatown's most respected reporters and is now on the staff of the *News*, told me, "There's no tradition of independent journalism in Chinatown—everyone is so scared. The papers represent political interests, which are tied to economic interests. You can't cover the tongs—we did the best we could. Every time we tested the limits, people got beat up. The gangs called me in the early nineteen-eighties and told me they were waiting for me on the street. In 1988, my publisher told me that Benny Ong had asked him to fire me and said he would give him thirty thousand dollars' worth of advertising." This sort of intimidation, Chan added, was common practice in Chinatown. "The publisher didn't fire me—he asked me not to cover Chinatown. The unwritten rule is: No names of tong members or gang members. We print their English names, or use phonetic Chinese to confuse everyone, or give just their Chinese surnames. Or we blank the name out—it's standard to put 'XXX' for a witness's name."

In 1978, Hsin Yuan Cheng, then a Chinatown columnist, was badly beaten on the street one night by five young men. He is sure that the reason he was attacked was that he wrote so many stories about the community. "At that time, I am young, and I try to correct everything," Cheng told me. In 1984, a member of Hip Sing's gang, the Flying Dragons, walked into the office of the editor of *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, a large Hong Kong-funded daily, and demanded at gunpoint that a reporter who had written about a dispute over an extortion be taken off the story. She was. In 1987, the *Center Daily News* dropped its coverage of a landlord-tenant dispute involving the gangs when its reporter was harassed. In 1989, a reporter from *Sing Tao* did not observe the unwritten rule, and wrote up the testimony of an On Leong boss in a murder trial. The reporter was fired but was rehired after he apologized personally to the On Leong boss, and the paper, in abject apology, sent the tong a roast pig, a traditional offering of respect. A Chinese TV reporter who shot footage of an On Leong gambling joint in the late eighties was told he

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would be killed if the story was shown.

Peter Lee, a Chinatown journalist, explained, "It's in Chinese culture to be careful of what you say, not to humiliate someone in public, to avoid confrontation. This is why tongs threaten us so freely. As the tongs see it, they have a legitimate beef when we cover them or print their names. It's a vicious circle. The longer people tolerate this, the less freedom they have." Perhaps having second thoughts himself about talking to an outsider, Lee added, "If one day you read that Peter Lee is found dead somewhere, you can pretty much draw the conclusion that I have a big mouth. I'm only half joking. I know there is that possibility. I hope the Justice Department and the F.B.I. will open an investigation into censorship and infringement of the First Amendment in Chinatown."

Quo Chen, a Taiwanese reporter who has worked in Chinatown, doubts whether anyone will ever do "the inner story" of the tongs and the gangs. "The damage would be too great—the dirt would be spread on everyone's head," he told me. "I mean community leaders. It's a nasty statement, but it's true. This is such a small community. We meet each other every day. No way to escape, no way. Suppose you are a publisher, you know someone who is a good friend of a tong member who's doing drug trafficking, prostitution. Because you take sides, you may lose money. Take my former paper, which comes out as a weekly in New York and as a daily in Taipei. It has enough money and manpower to investigate the tongs and the gangs—why doesn't it? Let me put it this way: these things are not a significant disease. Some of the tong members traffic in drugs, some launder money, but what is their relation to one another? We don't know. And we are not that interested in finding out. You have your way to survive, I have my way—that's the dialogue among Chinese. You may belong to a tong, but I do not. I understand you, and you understand why I don't see you as a criminal—your acts don't hurt my interests."

Additionally, some Chinese see tongs as legitimate, even admirable, because they provided financial backing for Sun Yat-sen's 1911 revolution and then for the Guomindang. Chiang Kai-shek used triads, secret criminal societies on which the tongs were modelled, to assist the Nationalists in the civil war against the Communists. After 1949, many triad members fled with him to Taiwan. Others formed the underworld in Hong Kong, maintaining ties to their American cousins the tongs. "It would take a dissertation to explain the admiration for these people," Quo Chen says. "They're not looked down on: they're always against the government, which in Chinese history has always been corrupt. The connection between the Guomindang and the gangs has its source in Sun Yat-sen. In a feudal society, to make a revolution you have to have organizational power, and the triads were it. So you see it in the government. In China and Taiwan, they say, 'You are in the black way, the dark root.' That means gangs. Now Uncle 7, tongs, overseas Chinese—all are attached to the Guomindang. It's nasty, but it's understandable if you know our history."

One story the Chinatown press stayed away from was a bitter dispute several years ago between City Hall and the C.C.B.A. The C.C.B.A. had arranged the election of several tong members to the board of a corporation overseeing a proposed addition to the Manhattan Detention Complex (known as the Tombs), a prison on the western edge of Chinatown; the addition would also include shops, and housing for the elderly. Richard Mei, Jr., who was an adviser on Asian affairs to Mayor Edward Koch, led a fight to remove the tong members. He told the Koch administration in a memo that the city could no longer support the project if the tongs remained members. Mei recalls, "We were afraid that they'd control the community space in the project or charge rent or protection money. One of the problems is that it has always been very difficult to gather evidence against the tongs." The city tried to shame the tongs off the board, saying that the C.C.B.A. had elected "unacceptable" members, including some associated with organized crime. Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said the police believed that the gangs served as enforcers for organized-crime activities. Benny Ong responded, in the *Times*, that the C.C.B.A. would not "tolerate this type of defamation."

The city won on a technicality—it took the C.C.B.A. to court for stacking the board. Richard Mei, who is now with the State Department, says, "I was vilified in the Chinese press. They said I was a yellow dog, and a traitor to the community. The C.C.B.A. put a notice on its door banning me from its premises." The project is finally going forward after years of delay.

Another subject that Chinatown journalists have avoided is the tightening of the tongs' control over the C.C.B.A. itself. The tongs have long been able to dominate the C.C.B.A. through its executive board, but until recently a gentleman's agreement barred them from electing one of their members president. In February of 1990, however, Benny Ong, the Hip Sing elder, and Chan Wing Yeung, the former national president of the rivalrous On Leong, shocked Chinatown by voting as a bloc at the C.C.B.A.'s annual election. "It's time for a change," Uncle 7 said. "All the past presidents have been corrupt. None of them have spoken English." He proposed raising the president's salary and extending his term from a year to two years. A former president of the local chapter of On Leong nominated a former president of the local chapter of Hip Sing. This nomination was seconded by the national president of the Chinese Freemasons. Chan Wing Yeung nominated Paul Yee, a businessman, and Yee's nomination was seconded by the national president of Hip Sing. Several hours later, the other candidate withdrew, citing "health reasons," and the C.C.B.A., over the objections of its outgoing president, who reminded members that they weren't permitted to vote on only one candidate, elected Yee.

A Chinatown reporter observed, "It was the first time these rival tongs coöperated and endorsed the same candidate and forced him down our throats. Usually, they don't coöperate and no one votes for their candidates. The *World Journal*"—one of Chinatown's newspapers—"and *Sing Tao* sanitized and glamorized the election and said it was great for Chinatown. That is ridiculous. You have a handpicked puppet of the Chinese Mafia running the C.C.B.A., Chinatown's govern-

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ing body. Imagine if the mayor of New York was handpicked by John Gotti!"

Chinatown's police, most of whom are white, have their own view of the area and its crime. To get a sense of how the tongs divide up their turf, I accompanied police officer Mike Wagner on his rounds. Wagner, a bachelor in his late thirties with a ruddy face, strawberry-blond hair, and a mustache, worked in gang intelligence in the Fifth Precinct for five and a half years, and is now a sergeant in another precinct. We were starting a week later than we had planned, because the previous week a businessman had been kidnapped by one of the gangs, and Wagner's unit had had to go out searching for him. Wagner's sergeant, Michael Collins, told me, "It happens down here. It was a business deal gone sour. His partners called the tong and arranged for the gang to get him."

From the front seat of an unmarked Chevrolet, the community, with its jagged neon signs, looked seedy and dangerous. We passed the headquarters of On Leong, and drove slowly down Mott Street. "There's No. 66," Wagner said. "Down there, in the basement, that's On Leong's gambling place. It's thirteen-card and pai gow. See that white piece of paper on the door? It says '*hoi p'ei*,' or 'Open Skin'—it means open for business. The skin is the surface of the tables. No. 63, another On Leong joint, was padlocked by the Police Department's public-morals squad, and it never opened up again.

"It's crazy here," Wagner went on. "These people strangle each other. Factories pay lucky money. Even the ones on the third floor pay. But to arrest for extortion we need a threat of violence. The gangs know that. So they say, 'My brother needs fifty dollars,' with no direct threats."

We turned up Bayard Street toward the Bowery. "This all belongs to the Ghost Shadows gang," Wagner said. "Mott is controlled by one of its factions, Bayard by another. They do extortions, robberies, and some kidnappings and homicides."

A 1988 Justice Department report on Asian organized crime says:

> The Ghost Shadows Gang is attached to the On Leong Tong.... Money from gang extortions, a traditional source of revenue, still flows up to the Tong leadership and is subsequently redistributed according to existing agreements. In many respects, however, the Shadows is an independent organization that works with, rather than for, the On Leong Tong.... Members of the Shadows are known to work as mid-level heroin couriers, travelling frequently to Toronto, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans and Miami. At least some heroin distribution occurs in collaboration with New York and Chicago LCN [La Cosa Nostra] families.

As we drove down Pell Street, a narrow passage through overhanging tenements, our car practically brushed the restaurants lining the sidewalk. "That's No. 9—a Hip Sing gambling parlor," Wagner said, pointing to a nondescript entrance. "It's open two eight-hour shifts a day. Uncle Benny's cut from that is a hundred and thirty thousand dollars per month, an informant told us. Might not be gospel." Wagner slowed the car in front of the Chung Shing Tea Parlor, a Flying Dragons hangout. A gang member in jeans and a parka, a street boss, came outside and greeted him. Inside, about fifteen *sai low*—"little brothers," as gang members are called in street slang—played video games.

The Justice Department report:

> There are three powerful Tongs in New York: Hip Sing, On Leong and Tung On. The leadership of each is believed to be controlled by [Chinese organized-crime] figures. . . . *Formal leadership of the Hip Sing* Tong is a complex arrangement of co-presidents, chief officers, executive staff, coordinators, external relations and assorted administrators. Informally, the power resides in Hip Sing's "Advisor-in-Chief for Life". . . Benny Ong. . . . The Flying Dragons Gang . . . is attached to the Hip Sing Tong. During the last three years, the Dragons have recruited heavily among Vietnamese youths who now comprise about one-quarter of the . . . gang members. The Dragons operate from Pell and Doyers Streets in Chinatown and are reported to have branches in other major cities, including Dallas, Houston, Atlanta and Washington, D.C.

On Division Street, opposite a statue of Confucius, Wagner showed me the Tung On headquarters, a three-story brick building. "This association has ties to the Sun Yee On triad, over in Hong Kong," he said. "That's the biggest triad in Hong Kong. The triads are banned in Hong Kong, you know. Tung On's boss brought back some twenty-five-year-olds from Sun Yee On to guard his gambling houses. His street gang, the younger kids, do the robberies and shootings." Clifford Wong, the handsome, dynamic thirty-eight-year-old leader of Chinatown's third most powerful tong, is known as a "legitimate" businessman. In 1989, the New Jersey Division of Casino Gaming Enforcement revoked Wong's "junket license" to bus gamblers to Atlantic City, charging that Wong was an organized-crime leader, and last year banned him from the tables. Wong's brother Stephen, who is known as Tiger Boy and is the leader of Tung On's gang, was convicted on federal narcotics charges two years ago.

"On this corner here, at the head of Catherine Street, is the Tsung Tsin Association, one of Chinatown's wealthiest businessmen's groups," Wagner told me. "The winner of its election is easily moved, shall we say, by Clifford Wong. No. 1 Catherine and No. 1 Division are the same building, and in the basement is the Tsung Tsin gambling house—two shifts, noon to 8 P.M., and 8 P.M. to 4 A.M., a multi-million-dollar business any given time. All the houses are."

Going down East Broadway, Wagner said, "No. 7, here, is a Fujianese gambling house occasionally." Farther on, he pointed out an unlit, five-foot-long neon sign running down the side of a building: "The Golden Star Bar," it said. "They used to call it Grandpa's—that was the owner's nickname. There was a shoot-out there in 1982. The restaurant never reopened." I knew the story, which is famous in Chinatown. Herbert Liu, an immigrant from Hong Kong, defected from Hip Sing and, with backing from the Chinese Freemasons, challenged Benny Ong's power. The challenge ended when four masked men carrying automatic weapons walked into the Golden Star Bar, a Freemasons hangout, and opened fire, killing three diners and wounding eight. Liu accused Benny Ong of ordering the shootings. Freemasons surrounded Hip Sing and briefly took over Pell Street. Liu held a press conference. Benny Ong said nothing. Several weeks later, he told a reporter from *New York:* "Sixty year I build up respect and he think he knock me down in one day?" Liu apologized to Benny Ong, and Hip Sing then took control of the Freemasons.

As we drove under the Manhattan Bridge into the Wild West of Chinatown, where few people were about, Wagner said, "Down here, when a gang comes in, it tries to show its power and do a lot of extortions and robberies. When you see a 'Grand Opening' sign, it's only a matter of time before the gang gets an extortion. The going rate here for a grand-opening extortion is three hundred and sixty dollars. Protection money is divisible by threes and sixes. And eight is lucky. It could be a thousand and eighty dollars—three times three hundred and sixty. Anything divisible by three, they like. But never four itself—the number four means death."

The Fukien Association, Wagner told me, has its headquarters at 125 East Broadway. Two stone lions out front scare away demons. "Their territory is Forsyth, Eldridge, and Grand Streets," Wagner explained. "The top guys in their gang, the Fuk Ching, are heavy into importing heroin." We headed up Eldridge Street, which looked especially shabby. "Three Mountain Association is another Fujian tong. Here's their gambling spot, No. 7. During the summer, they were so blatant. They'd open the door for air and there'd be a whole shitload of them in there. I guess there are about half a dozen permanent gambling spots in Chinatown—a lot less than there used to be.

"A lot of parents save their children from the gangs by sending them back to Hong Kong or the mainland to live with their grandparents. We know of three in the last month. We tell parents we can't babysit their kids—eventually, they're going to get locked up or dead. Immigrants are the ones with the runaways. The American-born Chinese, the wife stays home with the kids. You can't blame the new immigrants—they work so hard. The mother works eight to eight in a garment factory, the father works twelve to twelve in a restaurant, and who's home when the kids are? We had one runaway whose mother and father live in Brooklyn. They told me they put him in Chinatown in his grandmother's apartment. Come on! Everyone puts it over on Grandma!"

Wagner pointed out the window as we swung down Mott again. "See that?" he said. "Those two bullet holes in the back of the pay phone? That was an ambush of Ghost Shadows by some Flying Dragons, but Born to Kill is our worst problem. The Vietnamese came here five, six years ago and opened up the malls on Canal Street. That was the only place they could go; old Chinatown is full up. Vietnamese gangs are a problem in every major city—Houston, Washington, Philadelphia. Everywhere, there's a problem with them hitting Oriental jewelry stores. They rip off the Chinese elders because they know the elders won't report the crimes."

On our way up Bayard Street, we passed a number of stores shuttered with heavy metal screens. "See those big, expensive locks on the gates?" Wagner said. "The gangs Krazy Glue 'em if the stores don't pay."

We cruised by the Pell Street tea parlor again. "Look at 'em all in there, they're all Dragons," he said in amazement. "Twenty, twenty-five Dragons. The Chinese gangs have taken in a lot of Vietnamese for muscle. Vietnamese are crazies. They shoot anyone the gangs want."

PEOPLE who know Chinatown have different ways of explaining why the tongs, which were relatively quiet after the nineteen-thirties, when a series of tong wars ended, have had a resurgence since 1965. The commonest explanation is that the new immigrants flooding Chinatown since the change in immigration laws gave the tongs new life: more people meant more gamblers, and the tongs needed muscle to watch the pots. "We don't have Wells Fargo, so tongs hired kids," one resident said. "The kids rapidly outgrew the tongs. Now the tail wags the dog."

Nancy Ryan, who began working in Chinatown in 1976, after graduating from Yale Law School, is, as much as anyone, a historian of the gangs. She has prosecuted more of their members than anybody else in the city, and her version of gang history confirms the conventional wisdom. "People who were made gang members in the seventies tell me very similar stories," she said. "They were twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-year-olds, new immigrants from Hong Kong. They didn't know English, their parents were off working, they could look forward to rising to the level of waiter, maybe, or being a

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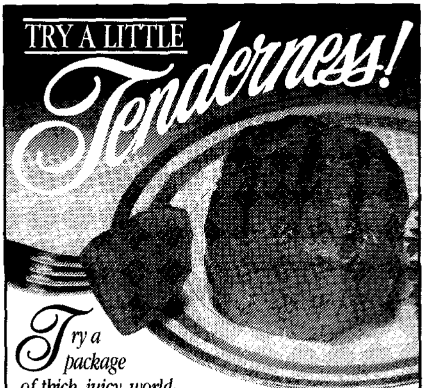

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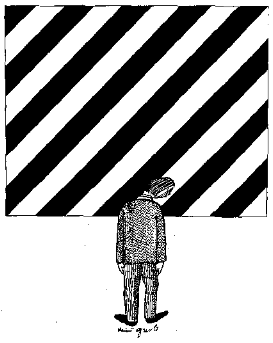
garment worker forever, and they were being picked on by other ethnic groups. At first, they banded together for self-protection, no heavy artillery. Then they began associating with an older group—men doing a lot of robberies. They got bolder and acquired guns from elders in the tongs, and claimed territories. In the early seventies, we had a lot of gang warfare—kids facing off across city thoroughfares and just shooting madly. Somehow, around that time, in a way that’s not clear to me, they took up with the tongs. The relationship is symbiotic. The gangs use the tongs to enhance their own prestige. They also make money collecting payoffs from the tongs’ gambling houses and acting as lookouts for the police. The tongs protect the gangs and use them to enhance *their* prestige, because the gangs inspire terror. There were a lot of drugs in the early seventies in Chinatown, and the story I got was that On Leong was not happy with the drug trafficking of the gang that controlled Mott Street then—the White Eagles—so in 1974 it replaced them with the Ghost Shadows. A lot of the Ghost Shadows and the Flying Dragons are members of the tongs. Hip Sing denies it, but that’s a lot of nonsense—the gang’s activities can be traced to the tong.”



In the mid-seventies, Ryan went on, the gangs grew more independent, graduating to organized crime, and extortions and robberies, on their own. “The stores paid without hesitation,” she said. Then she broke off to tell me about Eddie Chan, who ran On Leong in the late seventies and early eighties. A former staff sergeant in the Hong Kong police department, he had left Hong Kong, along with some forty other policemen, in the early seventies, during an investigation of corruption in the department. Chan was said to have made millions from illegal activities by then. He arrived in New York in 1975, opened a jade and antique store, and rapidly acquired a funeral parlor and interests in a chain of movie theatres, several restaurants, a gold exchange, and a Hong Kong commodities company. He engaged the services of Michael Nussbaum, a New York political consultant, and Nussbaum introduced him to senators and congressmen. Chan was called Fast Eddie by the police, for his swift ascent to the national presidency of On Leong.

By the late seventies, crime and gang warfare had become rampant in Chinatown. Alarmed by this situation, the New York Police Department authorized a group of detectives to investigate Asian crime. The group, which became known as the Jade Squad, was led by Sergeant James A. McVeety, who retired last year after thirty-three years of police work. The squad was given jurisdiction to work anywhere in the city, and began making inroads into Chinatown. Those inroads led to the only federal prosecution so far of a Chinatown gang, the Ghost Shadows. (Last month, thirteen people, all but one of them members of a Queens gang, the Green Dragons, were indicted under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations act.)

“In 1984, we indicted twenty-five Ghost Shadows for racketeering,” Ryan told me. The case had its beginnings with an anonymous tip indicating that a white woman whose body was dumped in the precinct in 1982 had been killed by the gang.

“The detectives went out with photos of the victim and asked a group of kids on Mott Street if they’d seen her,” McVeety said. “Our informant was with them. He noticed one kid shy away, and later he asked him why. He said, ‘Because we killed her.’ ”

Ryan, who prosecuted the case, recalled, “They picked the victim up in a bar, and she went to one of their apartments, not knowing they were Ghost Shadows. She had sex with one of them, then the rest of the gang came up to the apartment. She refused to have sex with the others, and one of them rushed at her with a cleaver. Eventually, seven raped her, then they sat around playing a kid’s game—rock, paper, scissors—to decide who was going to kill her. They left their lighters around the body, providing a flickering light. It turned out that gang rape was not uncommon.”

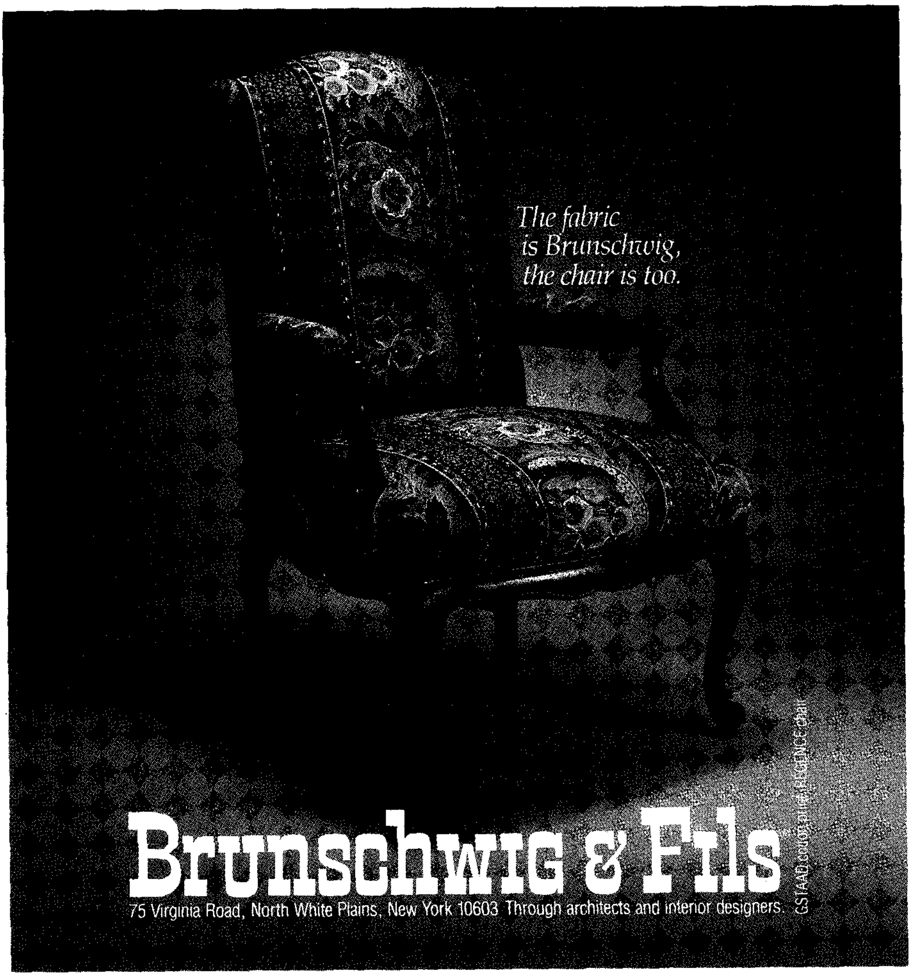
The same informant helped the Jade Squad and Ryan develop the 1984 case. The Ghost Shadows were charged with eighty-five crimes, spanning more than a decade—among them thirteen murders, forty-three acts involving murder, nine acts involving extortion, and two acts involving bribery. The investigators tape-recorded two extortions; negotiations between a gang leader and a gambling house about money; and a gang-initiation ceremony. A government summary of the charges alleged that proceeds from crime were used for “lawyers’ fees, bail money, and other legal expenses; entertainment, meals, and spending money for the ‘kids’ . . . and—of critical importance—gang apartments and guns.” It also described recruitment tactics: in schoolyards, for example, teen-agers were beaten by gang members while others recited the advantages of membership—girls, money, cars.

Somehow, Eddie Chan got away; he left the country secretly about a month after the indictment of On Leong’s gang was made public. “We were trying to develop a case against him,” District Attorney Morgenthau told me. Three months before Chan fled, the President’s Commission on Organized Crime had identified him as the leader of organized crime in Chinatown. A rumor spread that he was going to be arrested, and in the space of a few days Chinatown depositors withdrew six million dollars from the United Orient Bank, in which Chan was a major shareholder. By the time Chan disappeared, he had become a prominent Asian-American spokesman: fêting politicians at banquets, testifying before Congress, lobbying for larger immigration quotas, contributing to Ronald Reagan’s 1984 reëlection campaign and to the campaigns of local Democrats, among them Donald Manes, Geraldine Ferraro, and Mario Biaggi.

With Chan’s rout, and with half the Ghost Shadows in prison—all twenty-one who were caught pleaded guilty—Hip Sing was riding high in the mid-eighties. Around that time, Robert Stutman, then the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration in New York, grew concerned about the rise in purity of heroin on the Lower East Side and in Harlem and the Bronx. China White, a variety of heroin whose street purity is as high as eighty-five per cent, was inundating the streets. The drug comes from the Golden Triangle, the area where Laos, Burma, and Thailand meet, and makes its way to Chinatown through Hong Kong—the Chinese Connection. “We were missing the boat—we knew nothing about Chinese traffickers and their organizations," Stutman told me. "I requested an agent. We were very lucky. Richard LaMagna, our agent, happened to be fluent in Chinese—one of the real experts in the country on China. I asked him to form a group and find out what was going on."

Police around the country were coping with an increase in Chinese crime, and had begun to wonder about the involvement of the gangs, which exist in every city with a Chinatown and in some other cities as well, and of the tongs, which have chapters in many cities, and of certain other international criminal groups—Big Circle, for instance, a Chinese gang in Hong Kong with a branch in New York City, and the Wah Ching, a similar organization with ties to San Francisco. The feeling grew that these organizations were in some way interrelated and that the new wave of crime was the doing of groups as methodical and dangerous as the Mafia.

The realization was a decade late, federal authorities now acknowledge. In the nineteen-seventies, New York, like most other cities, had only token Chinese in its police department: in 1978, out of twenty-four thousand six hundred officers, there were fewer than twenty who were not white, black, or Hispanic. Chinese didn't sign up—"No good Chinese join the Army or the police," an old Chinese adage has it—and police departments made no effort to recruit them. (Even now, uniformed officers who are not white, black, or Hispanic make up less than one per cent of New York's police force.) Without Chinese-speaking police, authorities couldn't possibly understand Chinese criminals. China has nearly two thousand dialects—three hundred in Guangdong Province alone—and Chinese names are confusing. Chinese have a family name and two given names, and all three are necessary to identify someone. But, since classic Chinese has only a hundred surnames, the same names recur in millions of combinations. And they are written differently in English depending on the dialect: Ng (or Ong or Eng), a Cantonese name, is Wu in Mandarin, for example. Police departments were mystified by all this, especially since they couldn't find translators. "If the suspects switched to Fujianese on you—forget it," one New York policeman said. But the overrid-



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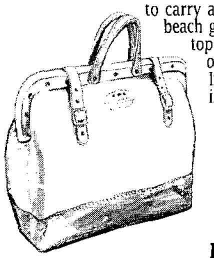

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ing reason that the feds were lost was that understanding and controlling Chinese crime had never been a priority. In the seventies, the F.B.I. and the D.E.A. were busy learning Sicilian and investigating the Cosa Nostra, and in the eighties they were fighting the crack epidemic. And non-Chinese police obviously couldn't go undercover in Chinatown.

Not until the mid-eighties, when Chinese began selling heroin outside Chinatown to other ethnic groups, could a few cases be made—mostly by Italian and other white cops, aided by the smattering of Chinese detectives who had been added by then to the force. But in the last five years, thanks to the group that Richard LaMagna supervised at the D.E.A., the number of cases has soared. Connections between Chinatown gangs and Asian crime networks and Hong Kong triads have been exposed by LaMagna's group, called Group 41, and by prosecutors in the New York Eastern District, who have made reputations as the first to prosecute a "new" crime. The cases have involved sixty-five hundred pounds of China White shipped through New York City since 1987—enough to last America's five hundred thousand heroin addicts a year and a half. "We believe the impetus is 1997, Hong Kong reverting to China," Charles Rose, the former head of the Eastern District's organized-crime and drug-enforcement task force, said. (He is now the district's executive assistant United States Attorney.) "We see many people trying to get their goods and money out of Hong Kong before the Chinese take over."

NOT long ago, I went to the D.E.A.'s offices on West Fifty-seventh Street to find out what Group 41 thought about the extent to which Chinese organized crime now controlled the heroin trade. Several agents there filled me in.

The veteran member of the group, a man in his fifties with a diffident manner, said, "In the early eighties, the Sicilians brokered heroin. No longer. Opium production in the Golden Triangle has doubled, and the Chinese have jumped in with both feet.

"Here it is in a nutshell," he continued. "The opium is grown in the Golden Triangle, mostly in Burma, and production is booming. Chinese there sell it to Chinese brokers in Hong Kong, and they deal with Chinese in Chinatown. That's the Chinese Connection. The usual route is from Bangkok trawler to Hong Kong trawler to Hong Kong speedboat to the harbor."

The supervisor interrupted. "But it also can be transited through Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and—this is new—the People's Republic. It's from ninety to a hundred per cent pure. Street heroin used to be five or ten per cent pure. This stuff on the street is generally cut to thirty or fifty per cent pure. It's lethal. We're very worried we're going to see a smokable heroin, too—mainly because of AIDS. Smokable heroin is widely used in Asia."

The veteran said, "We're getting killed on mail parcels."

"The gang kids wait in an empty apartment, sign for the package, and leave," the supervisor explained.

The one Chinese agent present said, "From Chinese to Chinese, heroin is one price—between sixty and eighty-five thousand dollars a unit. That's one and a half pounds. If Chinese sell to Dominican or Puerto Rican distributors, it's between eighty-five and a hundred and forty thousand dollars. Dominicans are the major buyers."

The supervisor: "We've had the rubber case, the umbrella case, the bean-sprout case—the stuff in that one was hidden inside the cylinders of machines that wash bean sprouts. Most of these cases involved large quantities—a few of them eight hundred pounds and up. Years ago, you were King Shit if you imported two hundred pounds of heroin. The largest seizure in the French Connection"—the heroin-smuggling route from Turkey to New York via Marseilles—"was only two hundred and twenty pounds."

The veteran: "We've found people working in kitchens in Chinatown, where you don't ordinarily make much money, who have little ruby-and-diamond Christmas presents and three thousand or four thousand dollars in their pockets. They invest in the jewelry stores. The stores launder the money back to Hong Kong."

The supervisor: "The most common means of money laundering is to have couriers carry the cash on planes. A person can carry as much as a million dollars. One suitcase holds half a million. Money is heavy—they use hundred-dollar bills if they can.

Or they 'smurf' it back—send it in money orders under ten thousand dollars, the limit for reporting to the government. Smurfs are . . . What the hell are smurfs?"

No one in the group knew exactly. Little gnomes, someone said. The supervisor nodded. "Yeah, gnomes in banks you buy off."

The veteran: "Normally, gamblers with debts become the couriers."

The supervisor: "The approach of 1997 is flushing out the animals. A lot of the traffickers are triad members, but the public has got it wrong—triads don't run this business. It's not like the Mafia. Some triad members traffic, but when they do it's their own show. They have no obligation to kick their profits up to a godfather." He looked glum. "The traffickers run to Taiwan. We have no extradition treaty with Taiwan."

WHEN Group 41 started, it picked as targets eight or nine top heroin dealers in Chinatown, among them Johnny Eng. Also known as Onionhead and Machine Gun Johnny, Eng had taken over Hip Sing's Flying Dragons in 1983, after its leader was murdered. He travelled often to Hong Kong, and authorities suspected that he was smuggling heroin. Eng, a self-possessed man in his mid-thirties, greeted cops by name on the street and held to the code of silence.

In the winter of 1986, Robert Lee, who runs the Asian American Arts Centre, an art gallery and dance studio occupying a loft on the third floor of 26 Bowery, knew nothing of Group 41's objectives, and in some ways that was fortunate, considering the nightmare events that followed the day when his landlord, one of the last Jewish landlords in Chinatown, introduced Lee to representatives of his new landlord—three casually dressed Chinese men in their twenties and thirties. They invited Lee to a restaurant, where two other men and a young woman joined them. "This is Johnny," one said. The man named Johnny sized Lee up without saying anything while the others made their pitch: they asked him to move his arts center—which was also his home—from 26 Bowery to a building they owned on Mott Street, where the rent would be the same. They explained that they planned to open a fancy Hong Kong-style restaurant on the two floors below the loft that Lee and his wife, a choreographer named Eleanor Yung, occupied, and that they needed the loft for the restaurant's banquet room. Lee said that he couldn't decide.

Later, a stranger called, and said that his name was Ngarn and that he represented the new landlord, but Lee asked for proof that this new landlord owned 26 Bowery and the property on Mott Street. Ngarn came to a meeting at the loft. Lee and his wife demanded to know the name of the new landlord, but all Ngarn said was that unless they vacated their loft they might run into trouble on the streets. "I'm a good guy," Ngarn said, "but the landlord is bad tempered and is associated with the Pell Street Boys"—another name for the Flying Dragons. He told Lee, "You sat next to their leader—Onionhead, Johnny Eng, the biggest gang leader in Chinatown—at the restaurant several weeks ago."

"We were then very frightened," Lee told me.

Nonetheless, Lee refused to move. Ngarn offered him two hundred and fifty thousand dollars if he would vacate, and persuade the other tenants to do so, or eighty thousand dollars if he would get rid of the fourth-floor tenants and move upstairs. Ngarn would not talk to the fourth-floor tenants himself, Lee noted, because they were *low faan*, and he dealt only with Chinese.

Eleanor Yung told the New York City Loft Board later, when she and her husband filed a complaint against their landlord for harassment, that they were in a difficult position. "To have accepted the offer would mean that we would have to begin associating with Hip Sing, and we would have to bring gifts to Uncle Benny," she testified. "And then we would be in their hierarchy of operation, we would have to listen to them." But, she said, she and her husband were trapped. "I couldn't turn it down immediately, because we were afraid it would backfire and they would set the gangs on us."

Friends urged them to resist. Their lawyer told them to forget it—they were up against Chinatown's biggest gang leader. Lee thought of people who had resisted: the woman who prepares the ducks in a Catherine Street restaurant had picked up her cleaver and chased a gang when it tried to extort lucky money from her; the owner of another restaurant had held a press

"Oh, I've had a few failures, followed by a string of successful marriages."

conference rather than give in to extortion. Those were the only two resisters Lee could think of who were still alive. He and his wife nevertheless decided not to give in. Ngarn informed them that in that case their landlord, still unnamed, would do things his way.

Soon after they announced their decision, construction began on the restaurant, and odd things happened: the hall lights went off; the hot water functioned only sporadically; and one day the façade of the building was gone, the arts center exposed. The lights were still not working when the restaurant opened, the following winter, and Lee and Yung had no intercom and no mailbox. By that time, they had lost two-thirds of their students, and Yung had done no choreographing for the season.

In pictures of the restaurant's New Year's opening party which were published in Chinatown papers, Lee recognized one of the men he'd met a year earlier. He was a thin, goggle-eyed man, identified as Shu Yan Eng, the owner of 26 Bowery. Lee remembered that Shu Yan Eng had sat next to Johnny Eng and had said very little.

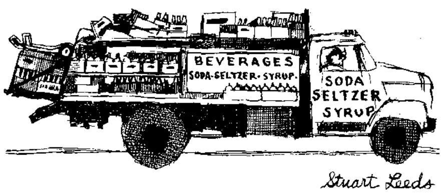
A couple of weeks later, a man from Hip Sing paid a visit to Lee's father, a retired laundryman who lives in Chinatown. Telling me this part of the story, Lee lost his composure, and covered his eyes to wipe away tears. He explained that, though his surname was Lee, his father was one of Chinatown's many "paper sons," who had entered the country with false papers, and that his actual surname was Eng. "My father has lived in the United States since he was thirteen," Lee said. "He was part of the all-male Bachelor Society. The men went back to China once in twenty years to see their wives and make them pregnant. My father still has his old friends, though there are fewer of them each year. They hang out in the back of barbershops, continuing their calm existence. This man visited him and said, 'Tell your son that everything is O.K.—O.K. to take his time, look for another place to move to, and we'll help him move.' My father is an Eng. Hip Sing is an Eng society, you see—this man came on behalf of the tong. They said, 'Oh, he's an Eng. Let's be nice.' I had no way to protect him. He didn't feel threatened—he was trying to help me. This man was his old chummy. They had now made it clear to me that they knew my father and where he hangs out. By this I knew they were threatening the life of my father."

Shortly after the visit to his father, Lee broke Chinatown's code of silence and reached out to the white world for help. He held a press conference and accused his landlord, Shu Yan Eng, of using the gangs to intimidate him into vacating his loft. The one Chinatown paper that sent a reporter stopped investigating the story when the reporter was threatened. Rumors spread that Lee and his wife were obstructing business, and merchants' contributions to their arts organization dropped.

In the spring of 1988, Lee and Yung began testifying before the Loft Board in their case against Shu Yan Eng. The case pivoted on Johnny Eng—who he was, and whether he was threatening the couple. Shu Yan Eng's lawyer bore down: Had his client ever threatened Lee? Had Johnny Eng? Had Hip Sing? No, not directly, Lee had to admit. And the lawyer forced Lee to concede that 26 Bowery wasn't his sole residence—the Lees occasionally shared a nearby apartment with a relative. "You've lost the case," Lee's lawyer told him. "You can bring a suit only if 26 Bowery is your home."

As Lee struggled to make the hearing officer understand how dangerous a threat involving Onionhead was, Johnny Eng, unbeknownst to Lee, had fled Chinatown, leaving the Flying Dragons in disarray. His sub-boss, Michael Yu, was arrested on narcotics charges. According to affidavits filed later by the government for Eng's extradition, Yu's downfall was a result of gambling.

Yu's girlfriend, Wah Tom Lee, loved to gamble. She was often found at the parlors on Pell Street that Yu ran for Johnny Eng and Hip Sing. Her debts rose into the thousands of dollars. At Eng's suggestion, she earned fifty thousand dollars by arranging for two friends to pick up heroin brought by Eng's couriers from Hong Kong to a washroom at Kennedy Airport. Several months later, Eng asked her to find people in Chinatown willing to receive packages mailed from Hong Kong. Inside each package, among tea and toys, was at least fifteen pounds of heroin. For the first delivery, Wah Tom Lee earned thirty thousand dollars and the receiver earned twenty thousand dollars. More packages arrived and more profits were collected. Yu and Lee sold some of the heroin themselves and made even greater profits. In September, 1987, together with some friends, they flew to Hong Kong with about six hundred thousand dollars of profits in their suitcases for Johnny Eng. Eng treated the couple and one of their friends to five days at Club Med in Indonesia.



Customs and D.E.A. agents intercepted the eighth package and arrested Yu and Wah Tom Lee on March 1, 1988.

That fall, Robert Lee pressed his complaint again, this time with a new lawyer, and with an expert witness to identify Johnny Eng. Peter Kwong, a Taiwanese immigrant who is a professor at the State University of New York at Old Westbury and the author of several highly regarded books on Chinatown, explained to the Loft Board that the Hip Sing tong was "an organization in some ways similar to the Mafia," which intimidates Chinatown with violence. "Either you move out of Chinatown, don't do business in Chinatown, or you basically shut up," he testified. "The code of silence is that it's understood we resolve things within Chinatown."

A year later, with the complaint still not settled, Lee one day looked up and saw five United States marshals in bulletproof vests running through his loft with guns drawn. They had arrested Shu Yan Eng for heroin trafficking, they announced, and were confiscating the building. One of them told Lee to send his rent checks to George Bush. "Bush has his problems, but at least he's fair," he said.

"It was like the cavalry coming to rescue us from our tormentors—absolutely surreal," Lee told me two months after the government took over his building. Lee is aware that revenge for resisting the gangs could come at any time, but he is not leaving Chinatown. "We love this community," he says.

Shu Yan Eng was recently acquitted on the narcotics charges, but he was convicted of tax evasion, and is now awaiting sentencing. Johnny Eng, who is charged with buying heroin from Shu Yan Eng and also with smuggling hundreds of pounds of heroin himself, is fighting extradition from Hong Kong. Prosecutors are hoping that if he can be brought to New York he will coöperate and provide the break they need to assemble a racketeering case against Hip Sing on a gamut of charges, including heroin trafficking. "It comes down to whether we can ever show that Johnny Eng had to pay grace money to Uncle Benny," one United States Attorney told me, referring to profits from crimes.

A Chinatown elder confides, "The next two or three years will be the worst, until a successor to Uncle 7 is chosen."

AS prosecutors wait for Johnny Eng, one link in the Chinese Connection has been broken: Tai Pei Liquors, at 53 Mott Street, in the heart of Chinatown, is gone. The sign has been removed, the stock sold, and drygoods have replaced the overpriced liquor. Peter Woo, who was its owner, is gone, too, awaiting sentencing for his part in the largest heroin haul in United States history—eight hundred and twenty pounds, worth a billion dollars on the street. It was this case, more than any other, that alerted authorities to the rise of a new, Chinese Mafia.

Woo was also part of Bachelor Society Chinatown, the community of men who grew up together in the thirties and early forties without Chinese women, knew one another's business, feuded and traded with each other, and slowly took over the positions of power in Chinatown's family associations and tongs. Woo, a man of medium height, with a round stomach, had an aura of self-satisfied bonhomie. After he began to grow bald, he wore a cap with a little brim, like a Greek fisherman's cap. He looked as though the world were his oyster, and for many years it was.

Woo came to this country from Guangdong Province in the nineteen-thirties. During the Second World War, he fought in the Asian theatre. When he returned to New York, he became conspicuous in Chinatown: he was a leading shrimp and lobster wholesaler, a landlord, and a restaurateur, and he had contacts with City Hall. Because he spoke English, he was one of the few who could go outside Chinatown. "Woo was the first Chinatown person to become involved in politics," a resident who had known him for many years told me. "He was very important from 1950 to 1965. He knew everyone in city politics. He got a lot of things for the Chinese community—jobs, and help from City Hall—without receiving any pay. He just built up his reputation."

Woo cultivated several New York mayors, starting with Robert Wagner, in the fifties, and in 1960 turned out the Chinese vote for John Kennedy. Woo reportedly ran a gambling parlor in the American Legion hall in Chinatown. The Chinatown Democratic Club, which Woo started in the basement of his liquor store, doubled as a gambling hall, and made him a millionaire in the sixties. Some said he paid off City Hall to make sure his gambling joint was the only one in Chinatown at the time. But he was so tightfisted that lion dancers, who bless each store at New Year's, could get little money from his store. Estranged from his wife, he lived for a time with an actress from Hong Kong. He travelled often to the racetrack, to Las Vegas, and to the Far East. At night clubs in Hong Kong, he was introduced as a big shot—the worldwide head of the Eng Association (Eng is his surname in Cantonese), an overseas political leader.

In the late seventies and early eighties, however, Woo seemed to be semi-retired. He became strangely inconspicuous, though he still spent hours at the liquor store, most of them on the phone. Then, toward the end of 1987, a Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong, a thirty-seven-year-old importer-exporter, gambler, and kung-fu expert named Simon Au Yeung, walked into the F.B.I. office in Chicago with a tale that was of great interest to the agents there. Au Yeung said he had spent a small fortune to infiltrate the operations of top Southeast Asian drug traffickers. The names he dropped were all Group 41 targets; among them was Eddie Chan, the former On Leong boss, who had been a fugitive in Asia since 1985.

The F.B.I. knew far less than Group 41 about Chinese traffickers. "The Asian community is so tight-lipped," I was told by Jules Bonavolonta, a former assistant special agent in charge of the organized-crime and drugs

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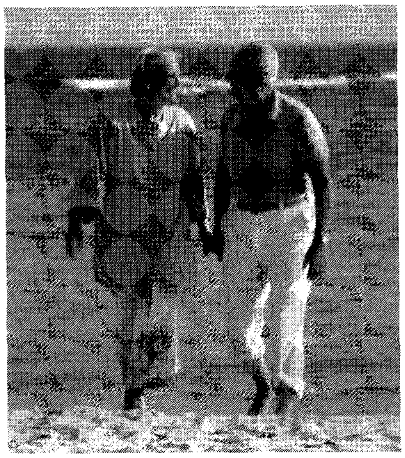

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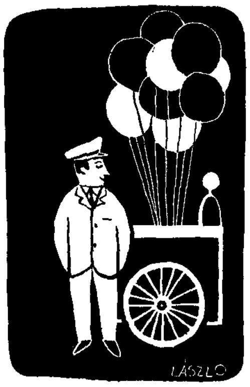
divisions of the F.B.I. in New York. "There's an ethnic code of silence, the way there was with the Italians for years. Au Yeung's offer to go undercover was unprecedented."

Robert Shaw, the head of the Asian-crime squad in the Chicago office, said, "Usually, working a case, you're at the lower or middle levels, reaching for the top. Au Yeung's information put us at the top immediately."



Au Yeung told the F.B.I. that the drug dealers had asked him to join their operations and use the Taiwanese import-export company he headed to smuggle heroin into the United States. He said he had met Eddie Chan at an international meeting of On Leong in Taipei in 1986, and Chan had liked him enough to have him introduced to Lai King Man, a major Hong Kong heroin smuggler. Au Yeung and Lai had gambled together, and one night in Manila, Au Yeung recalled, Lai had lost seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars in a single hand. Au Yeung also said he'd gone on shopping expeditions with Eddie Chan for presents to give Taipei bar girls. To cultivate Chan further, Au Yeung said, he'd given him twelve bottles of rare Louis XIII cognac, which cost six hundred dollars a bottle, and a Xerox machine. The F.B.I., which had been investigating links between the Cosa Nostra and the tongs, was also interested to hear about a "juice" loan—a street term for money lent by a loan shark—that Au Yeung had received from a Chicago member of On Leong who was known to collect "street taxes" in Chinatown for the Chicago mob. In September of 1987, Au Yeung got a second juice loan, of fifty thousand dollars. Au Yeung told the F.B.I. that he had planned to use this money to buy drugs but had then lost it gambling in Hong Kong with the drug dealers.

By the time Au Yeung turned up with his improbable tale, he had spent seventeen increasingly disillusioned years in Chicago. The son of a Hong Kong businessman, he had come to the United States on a student visa, hoping for a college education and a better life. Instead, when his visa lapsed he became an illegal alien, surviving by working as a bartender, a busboy, and a waiter while studying off and on at the University of Illinois. Somewhat later, he had founded a kung-fu association and had managed several well-known Chicago restaurants. Au Yeung was apparently not new to the F.B.I.; for four years, he had reportedly been a free-lance informer for its foreign-counter-intelligence unit, which monitors espionage in the United States, and had provided information on Taiwan's political activities in Chicago. (The F.B.I. will not comment on this.) Although the F.B.I.'s Asian-crime squad didn't know what to make of Au Yeung (for one thing, he had a minor criminal record), the bureau decided that his information checked out, so it gave him a contract, for twenty-five hundred dollars a month, to gather evidence against Chinese traffickers. As part of the investigation, the F.B.I. made payments on Au Yeung's juice loan.

The first person he got in touch with was Peter Woo, to whom he had been referred by an old Army buddy and Eng cousin of Woo's—the Chicago loan shark. When Woo sold Au Yeung a pound of ninety-two-percent-pure China White for the bargain price of thirty-five thousand dollars, the F.B.I. took notice. "The amount and the purity were a clue that Woo had connections to a source in the Golden Triangle," Shaw explained, and Bonavolonta added, "We knew we had something big."

"At this time, I don't think Woo is a biggie," Au Yeung told me in January of 1990. "He's an old-timer. He likes to brag a lot. He's kind of broke. He doesn't have the potential to buy cheap and sell dear. His aim is to get a commission from each sale, maybe three thousand dollars a transaction."

Au Yeung was right about Woo. Woo was a hub in the Chinese Connection—a broker who brought Asian sellers and American buyers together. Occasionally, he bought a small amount of a shipment himself, and to sell it he turned to his partner, a meat-market owner two doors from Tai Pei Liquors. "Don't distribute through Chinese or the tongs, especially not Hip Sing and Johnny Eng," Woo warned his new customer, Au Yeung. "Uncle 7 may be a stoolie. Sell only to blacks and Italians."

For months, the F.B.I. tailed Woo, to and from the OTB in Chatham Square, where he bet daily, and Atlantic City, and the racetrack, and it listened in on a wiretap of the liquor-store phone as he made deals with Chinese suppliers in Singapore, Hong Kong, and many cities in the United States and Canada. Charles Butera, a New York police detective who, with F.B.I. special agent Geoffrey Doyle, was in charge of the case, told me, "Woo was a wheeler-dealer, always looking for a way to make a buck. He did legitimate deals, too, bringing people together for his wholesale-seafood business. He'd mix the truth with lies to better his position, or to make a buck. He played both ends against the middle, constantly. As he got the money, he'd gamble it away. Sometimes he spent it before it came in. He was always meeting with people. People in Chinatown respected him and went to him for help. Every afternoon, when he walked back from the OTB after checking on his bets, people would stop him on the street to ask his advice. He always had a smile."

The F.B.I. tailed Woo to Little Italy and to Staten Island for meetings with Mafia associates. After months of waiting for more heroin, the agents began to wonder if Woo was a dead end, but then he suggested that Au Yeung meet his supplier in Hong Kong. The F.B.I. flew Au Yeung over in September of 1988, and there Chan Hok Pang, a quiet thirty-seven-year-old with the mark of the unicorn—a large mole between his eyebrows, considered good luck by some Buddhists—offered to do business with him. Au Yeung checked with his acquaintances in Hong Kong's triads and learned that Chan belonged to Sun Yee On, the largest triad, and was linked to Khun Sa, the warlord leader of the Shan tribe, in Burma. Khun Sa oversees the production of more than sixty per cent of the world's heroin, and is the source of the Chinese Connection. Au Yeung claims to have seen Khun Sa's headquarters—a mountaintop stronghold, defended by a private army of several thousand men and by SAM missiles. "When I learn Chan is working for Khun Sa, I am reluctant to go after him," Au Yeung said. "That's just a little bit too big. He's offended, he'll kill you in seconds. We all have our limits. That was mine."

The F.B.I. nevertheless persuaded Au Yeung to go on. "Getting to Khun Sa was a dream," I was told by Dan Bellich, the agent in Chicago who convinced Au Yeung that he should press on. "We did not force him," Bellich added.

After many twists and turns in the case, Chan Hok Pang arrived in New York in February of 1989 to supervise a heroin shipment. When agents raided three houses in Queens, they found eight hundred and twenty pounds, vulcanized inside hundreds of golf-cart tires. Forty-four suspects in Hong Kong and Singapore and in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver were eventually arrested. Many of them pleaded guilty, including Peter Woo. Khun Sa himself was indicted on federal narcotics charges later that year.

"It was an incredibly sophisticated and exquisitely planned shipment," I was told by Jacques Semmelman, a former Assistant United States Attorney, who successfully prosecuted several of the defendants. "The tires were opened in Thailand, the heroin was fitted in, and they were revulcanized. The shipment went from one country to another, making its way across the world, and not one thing went wrong. It looked very easy, very easy, to import eight hundred pounds of heroin into the United States. The breakdown occurred on the receiving end, with Peter Woo. Woo was the key to all this, directly or indirectly."

Last fall, during the trial of one of his suppliers, Woo gave his account of why he had changed from brokering politics to brokering heroin. The self-described "shrimp king of the world" admitted having smuggled illegal aliens and heroin into this country, and having run gambling clubs in Chinatown. Woo's double life of respected businessman and political fixer, on the one hand, and smuggler and gambler, on the other, is typical of Chinatown: its tong bosses and drug dealers and bookies are often also legitimate businessmen.

Woo told the court that he began dealing in drugs in the mid-eighties, after losing a lot of money trying to corner the shrimp-export market in China. The defense argued that he began far earlier, after incurring losses at a casino in Hong Kong. They portrayed him as a ladies' man, with three girlfriends around the world; as a frequenter of massage parlors in Asia; and as a heavy gambler, who ran up large debts in Hong Kong. Woo said that he was "pretty well known among the Chinese community as well as the American community." He also said that he knew almost every government in the Far East. On the stand, Woo exhibited no remorse, and bridled when his prestige was impugned. When he was asked where he obtained money to start buying drugs, he snapped, "Sir, twenty or thirty thousand dollars, and I have been doing business since 1946—you don't think I have that much amount of money?"

Chinatown residents have their own ideas about how Woo became *bot fun guey*, a "white powder ghost," or heroin dealer. "Before he retires, he spend so much, and he couldn't make up," one said. "If you live that kind of life, like a rich man, you become poor, you won't be able to survive. He thought he was smart—he just do like a matchmaker. When the deal went down, he maybe was in Toronto. He didn't understand narcotics conspiracy law."

Just days before his arrest, Woo was promoting the idea of a political-action committee for Chinatown. "We have to get our fair share," he was telling friends.

AFTER Woo's arrest, Simon Au Yeung, a man who is like Woo in many ways—a gambler rumored to have large debts, an international trader, a boastful, charming con man—disappeared briefly into the witness-protection program. His lawyer, a former Chicago cop named Daniel Soso, told me that there was a million-dollar contract out on him, and that Au Yeung would meet me only if I travelled to a "safe" location, and paid for both his and Soso's travel and hotel accommodations there as well.

We met at a resort in the winter of 1990. Soso wore jeans; Au Yeung was in a suit, with a tie whose price tag ($37.50) he'd forgotten to remove. He had a round, smooth face and curly hair—unusual for a Chinese. He proudly showed me an Uzi machine gun in his briefcase and two .9-mm automatics under his jacket. There was tension in the air throughout our meeting.

The Chinese Connection, Au Yeung said, takes advantage of "the govern-

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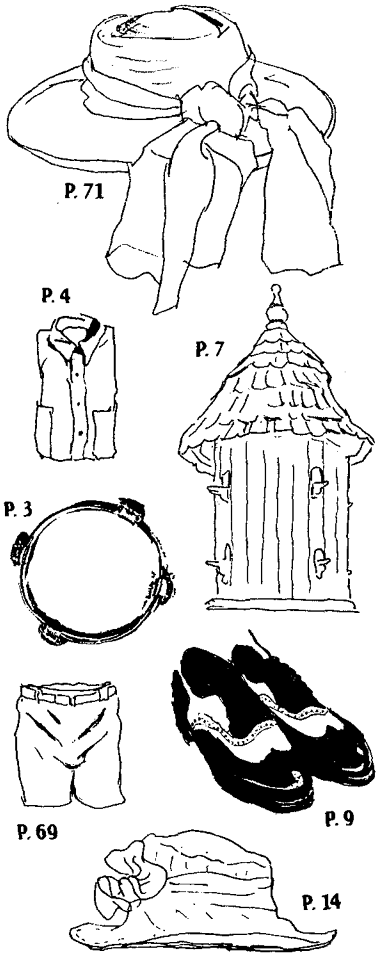

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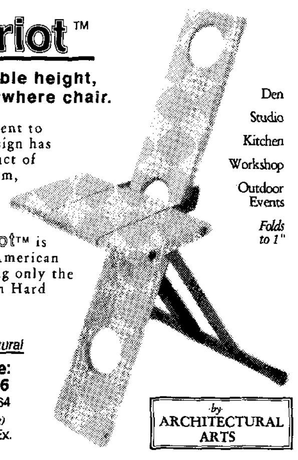

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ment's overlooking Chinatowns and their isolation. Heroin is viewed simply as a commodity: you buy cheap and sell dear. To Chinese, they are not harming their own people. The biggest customers aren't Chinese; they're blacks, Dominicans, Mexicans, whites. And heroin trafficking is an easy way to accumulate wealth, to get a good face. So long as Chinatowns are kept isolated, the criminals can do anything they want, because the Chinese community isn't offended by drug trafficking. They will stick up for their own, they will not accept the role of the U.S. government to prosecute Chinese."

He had volunteered to go under cover for the F.B.I., he said, because the drug dealing and corruption in Chinatowns appalled him. "I was in Hong Kong in the mid-nineteen-sixties, when the Hong Kong police were corrupt and mixed up with the triads, but here in the U.S. it turns out to be some of the tongs which are criminal. First time I met with the F.B.I., in the seventies, no one could care less. I felt it was a common concept of law enforcement at the time that this is Chinatown business, let them handle it."

Au Yeung went on, "Taiwan has the upper hand in Chinatowns now. The immediate reason is the murder of Taiwan's foremost critic in 1984 by a Taiwanese gang in the United States. I hate it so much. No one should do that in the U.S. Plus, no Chinese should be afraid walking around or have to pay extortion money to do business. In the early years, they came here as coolies, without much education, and they had to stay together to fight the 'white devil,' their name for Americans. But time flies, and we got so many different people immigrating now, we should live by the U.S.'s rules.

"The men who make the unwritten rules in Chinatown that protect the On Leong and Hip Sing say the rules protect welfare of all Chinese. But look at New York, San Francisco, Boston. In New York, for instance, the tongs are in massage parlors, drugs, gambling associations. The streets are under control of the gangs. The victims are afraid—the ones who badly need help are those who have to rely on Chinatown and couldn't survive outside. They are afraid of reprisals, they take corruption for granted, so they just keep suffering."

In our discussion, Au Yeung unveiled another motive for his undercover work: "It was my ego trip. Put it this way—I'd like to join the bureau for a long time. I came to the U.S. with high expectations of myself. Later, because of so many personal and financial things, I couldn't achieve what I expect."

Here Soso put in, "I'll be blunt. He found himself in a situation where he was involved with a lot of bad guys overseas and he wanted to do good. He also wanted to see political change in Taiwan. And it fed his ego that he was being a star undercover agent for the government." He added that it was against his advice that Au Yeung had left the witness-protection program. "He's crazy," Soso said. "He is irrationally convinced of his invulnerability."

Au Yeung declared that he'd had to leave the program because the Chinese press attacked him as a stoolie and a drug dealer who had coöperated with the F.B.I. only to avoid arrest. He angrily insisted that he was no stoolie or criminal, and had never sold drugs. But his account of what led him to infiltrate the Chinese international drug rings before becoming a contract employee of the F.B.I. struck me as unconvincing. For instance, when I asked him how he had first met the most wanted Chinese criminals, he replied merely, "On business overseas."

He had left the witness-protection program, he said, to be able to talk to the press and clear his name, and to convince other Chinese that helping the federal government fight drug dealers and crime would not harm them. "The Chinese press say I'm going to hide for the rest of my life. I'm *not* going to hide! The bad guys have to hide. I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I hide? The way I see it, the drug dealers can get killed like me. Put it this way—if they come after me, I hope I can take out two on the way down." As he left, smiling, and brushing aside concern for his safety, he said, "I'm a tiger."

Au Yeung and I talked several times by phone in the months after our meeting, and the more we talked the more bizarre he seemed. His motives multiplied, becoming more complicated with each interview. He seemed to be always holding back information, to have one more veil to drop. His story was full of holes, and he often retracted things he had told me earlier. Even Daniel Soso agreed that his client was a con man. "I can't figure him out yet," he said. "I don't know why, when he's holding back.

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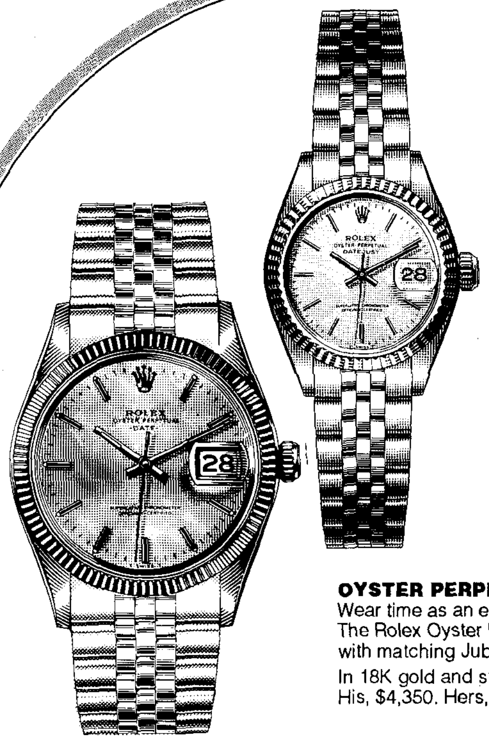
It's difficult to figure out his reactions." This elusiveness, of course, kept him alive during eighteen months of undercover work, sometimes without any F.B.I. backup. Most of Au Yeung's stories are impossible to verify; he alone knows whether or not they are true.

On one occasion, Au Yeung said that he had initially called the F.B.I. in 1983 not out of idealism but to save his skin—something that he and the bureau have repeatedly denied. He said that gambling had been his chief entertainment in Chicago. Once or twice, he had gambled at On Leong's building, the gateway to Chicago's Chinatown. On its third floor, disputes were arbitrated. On the second floor were gambling tables for pai gow and fan-tan. In 1982, he said, he let a relative use his account with a suburban bookie. The relative lost his entire credit line—ten thousand dollars. The bookie demanded payment. Au Yeung worked out a deal with the bookie in which the relative would pay off the debt in weekly installments. The relative's wife, however, threatened to go to the police. At that point, Au Yeung said, he went to Hong Kong for two months with his family to see his father, who was ill. When he returned, the bookie again threatened him about the unpaid debt, and he alerted the F.B.I., thus beginning his four years of free-lance informing.

As Au Yeung told it, he decided to investigate the On Leong officials he met in Taiwan on his own, without F.B.I. approval, and to pay for the investigation with his winnings at On Leong's gambling parlors in Chicago. One night, he won twenty-five thousand dollars, the next night forty thousand, and, eventually, a total of two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. "I found a trick in fan-tan," he said. "It takes time and patience."

To further his investigation, he continued, he joined On Leong and went to Taiwan to meet Eddie Chan. Two years later, when Au Yeung was a contract F.B.I. employee, Eddie Chan became suspicious after an F.B.I. raid on the On Leong building in Chicago. He invited Au Yeung to Manila and warned him about betraying the tong. Au Yeung kept his composure, and Chan, mollified, introduced him to some Dragon Heads, as chiefs of organized crime and drug-trafficking groups in the Far East are known. "It



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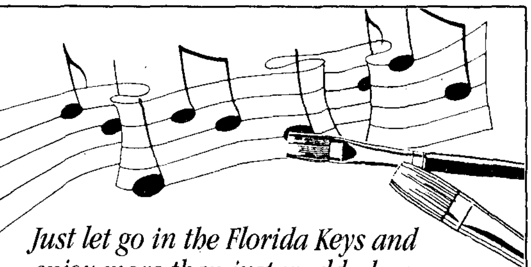

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was like a dinner party, with fifteen or twenty people," Au Yeung said. "Eddie vouched for me. It was the biggest mistake Eddie Chan made." He laughed. "Now a lot of people think Eddie's working for the authorities."

Au Yeung's evidence against On Leong and Eddie Chan became the starting point of a second federal case, a mammoth racketeering indictment handed down last summer against On Leong. The Justice Department has charged that the tong ran an illegal-gambling operation in several of its chapters in the United States, protected that lucrative operation by means of the Ghost Shadows, and paid off, assaulted, threatened, or murdered anyone who got in its way. Twenty-nine people, including four past On Leong national presidents—Eddie Chan among them—and the organization's current national president, have been indicted, and On Leong buildings worth millions of dollars in Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, and Miami have been seized. Sixteen of those indicted have pleaded guilty. The case, which is being tried now in Chicago, seeks eleven and a half million dollars in illegal-gambling proceeds from the tong, and aims to shut down the tong's illegal activities. It is the first case against a Chinese tong by the United States government, and, incidentally, is the very case that the Manhattan District Attorney's office failed to make in the mid-eighties when it prosecuted the Ghost Shadows, and Eddie Chan disappeared. The case has already had repercussions: before the trial began, a leader of the New York chapter of On Leong, who had been subpoenaed to testify, was murdered.

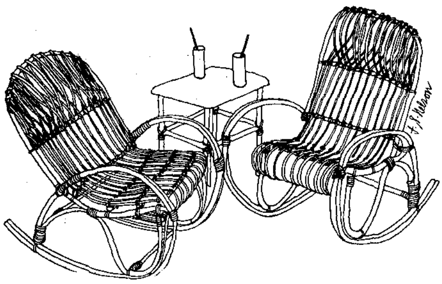
Au Yeung's principal target in this case (besides Eddie Chan) is a man who, like Peter Woo, rose to wealth from gambling parlors in New York's Chinatown. Chan Wing Yeung, Eddie Chan's handpicked successor, is on trial in Chicago for racketeering and running an illegal gambling operation. Chan Wing Yeung, who is in his mid-forties, was a waiter until 1977, when Uncle 7 went to jail along with a man who ran a gambling parlor on Mott Street. While those two were in jail, I was told, Chan got financial backing to open a gambling house of his own. He quickly became a millionaire. With some of the profits, he bought a restaurant on the ground floor of On Leong, and in 1987 was elected the tong's national president. His younger brother Chan Wing Wa is now the national president. Another brother heads a faction of the Ghost Shadows.

In the Chicago trial, Chan Wing Yeung's lawyer admitted that his client bet on On Leong games but scoffed at the idea that he directed a racketeering enterprise. On Leong is the same sort of organization as the Lions' Club, the lawyer argued, and gambling is an ancient, respectable part of Chinese culture.

The F.B.I. agent who directed the case acknowledged that gambling had existed in Chicago's Chinatown for generations. Why, then, I asked, hadn't the F.B.I. brought the case years ago? He replied, "What's sexy? What's interesting? Kidnapping? Murder? Is Chinese gambling? We could execute gambling search warrants every day here, but is it exciting? Is it worthwhile? Is it going to get prosecuted? What made it exciting was that this is a national organization, with a large amount of revenue, unreported income, tax violations, and with forfeitures that could be initiated under the RICO statute. And then, all of a sudden, it wasn't just a gambling case; it was bribery, too."

What made that happen, the agent said, was Au Yeung. He had returned to his old gambling haunt in the On Leong building and gambled again, this time undercover. His testimony led to the raid and to the seizure of the building. He also identified about a hundred gamblers who were present during the raid, some of whom are coöperating witnesses for the prosecution.

The F.B.I. has not hired Au Yeung. It considered giving him the Good Samaritan Award for citizens who aid its investigations but then decided not to. Instead, the Justice Department awarded Au Yeung two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for invaluable help in the Peter Woo heroin case and the On Leong gambling case. Au Yeung, who is always heavily armed, now sends out Christmas cards in envelopes bearing his return address, and is hoping to sell the movie and book rights to his story as the first Chinese to bust Chinese organized crime and the Chinese Connection.



On Sundays, half a million people descend on Chinatown. Most are Chinese, but tourists invade, too, and all nationalities and cultures drift down Mott Street. Sunlight sparkles off red heads and blond heads in the river of black-haired Chinese. Trendy young Chinese women with pipe-cleaner legs in cutoffs walk by with white guys; others, decked out in leggings and puffy skirts, are on the arms of Chinese men. Prosperous, beautifully dressed Chinese, in from Hong Kong or Europe, stroll through the streets, speaking English.

Above, leaning out of tenement windows, old men watch the drifting carnival. One lights a joss stick and, with a hairless, sagging arm, puts it on the fire escape to burn. Behind him, other old men in their undershirts move like ghosts in the dimness of a *gong si fong*.

On Sundays, no one toils except waiters and cooks and gambling-house dealers. A burden lifts from this desperate community, strangled by miserable wages and organized crime. All over Chinatown, families stroll, shop, gather for the noonday dim sum. In huge, noisy restaurants, they *yum cha*—sip tea and gossip.

The OTB is mobbed, as it is every Sunday.

The Buddhist temples are also full. People pray to Kuan Yin, the goddess of mercy, for male children and for wealth.

Barbershops hum with business. Sundays are propitious days for haircuts.

In the Kong Kee soybean shop, Mrs. Kong Kee cuts rice bean cake.

Students from uptown buy books from the People's Republic. Chinese from the outer boroughs and New Jersey and Connecticut make matches, celebrate birthdays at banquets, visit family associations.

Hundreds push into the C.C.B.A. to see the Shanghai Opera. Upstairs, in classrooms, children laboriously copy Chinese characters.

In the old Mee Heung Chow Main factory, four elders play mah-jongg, wedged between boxes of noodles.

There is no sign of life in the On Leong building, at the portal of Chinatown. A curtain billows into the boardroom through an open door on the balcony. Former national president Chan Wing Yeung has lost twenty pounds since being indicted, in August, people say. The word on the street is that Big Boss Eddie Chan may come back and cut a deal.

Gamblers avoid two former On Leong gambling spots, on Mott and Bayard Streets; both places were raided a few weeks before the RICO indictment was handed down in Chicago.

Today, peddlers have taken over. Dozens of them crowd the Bowery. Two men seated on low chairs on the sidewalk tell the fortunes of a couple, squatting before them, by their facial bone structures. Nearby, another fellow sits by an open suitcase that is heaped high with pink, yellow, and white puffy hair bows, which he sells for fifty cents. He wears a pink bow on his head, laughing at himself.

Confucius has had a birthday. At his feet flowers bloom.

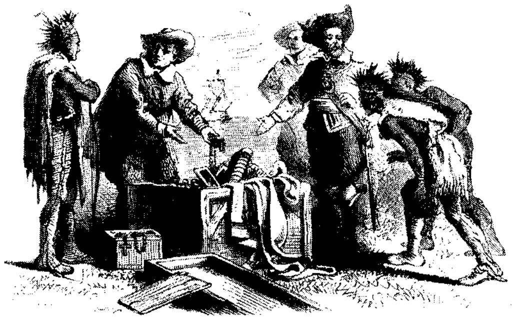
Along Canal, venders with steel pushcarts display fish balls, intestines, chicken feet, peanut cakes, curried squid, deep-fried peppers and eggplants, and chewy fish skins stewed with turnips. All around Chinatown, venders fry *chong yow bing*—thick, tasty scallion pancakes.

Mr. Lin, a Fujianese peddler, sells umbrellas at a corner. Children hawk blocks of frozen shrimp from Asia. Shoppers trample newspapers, mud, fishtails, betel nuts. The litter blows around their ankles.

On Pell Street, German tourists scramble out of a bus to videotape the vertical restaurant signs. Teen-age gang members in Hong Kong suits pace outside No. 16 and watch indifferently. A car with New Jersey plates pulls up. "Oh, wow! Look! Chinese Dumpling House!" a girl inside shouts.

"You finally made it to Chinatown!" her date says, kissing her.

Two years ago, crowds watched news broadcasts from Taiwan and China near a Democracy Wall on Bayard Street, which was plastered with caricatures of China's gerontocracy, and they laid oranges and other food offerings at altars under signs saying "MARTYRS OF TIANANMEN SQUARE," "BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN AND MOON," "SACRIFICE TO A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE." Today, the altars are gone,



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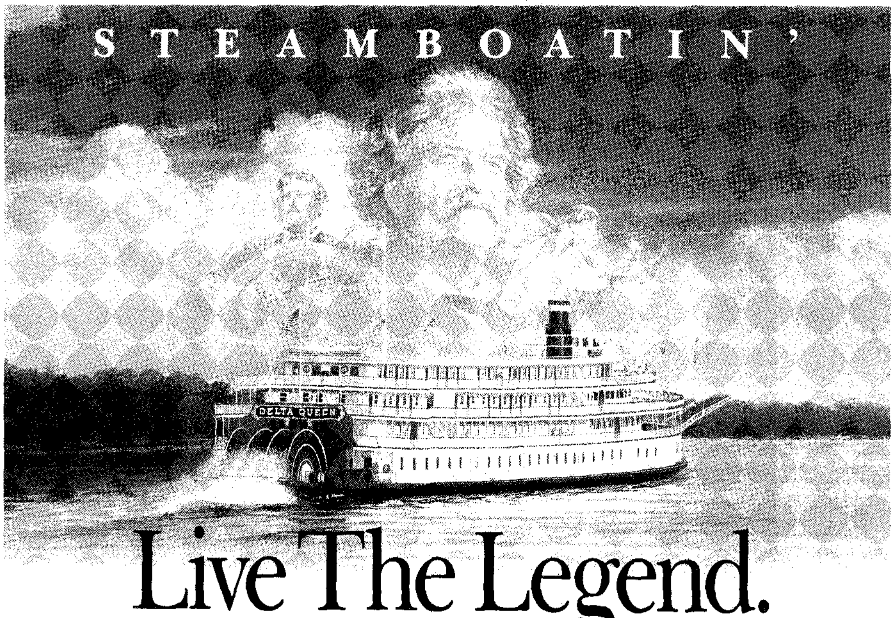

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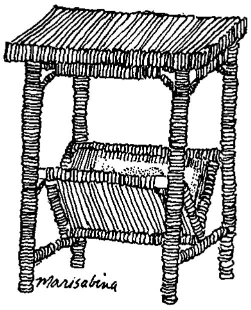
the outrage and the sense of purpose having seeped out in the drive to make money and escape from Chinatown. Today, a student trying to register voters complains, "It's a hard job. People don't know the candidates, and in Asia the tradition is that people don't get involved in politics."

The wonton man is out. A thin man with coarse black hair, he works on the sidewalk on an upended cardboard box, on which a ceramic plate is piled with ground meat. For utensils, he has two scrapers. In his left hand is a floured square of dough, the wonton. He scrapes twice off the pile of meat, puts the dab inside the square held in his cupped hand, and makes a fist, squeezing the dough until it resembles a belly button. Customers watch. He puts the wonton on a cookie sheet on his counter—another cardboard box. When he has twenty wontons, he takes a customer's twenty-dollar bill. He asks for smaller change, but the customer has none. Looking around furtively, he slips the twenty down his sock and under his foot, and slips his foot back in his shoe. From somewhere else he extracts a wad of neatly folded singles, and he hands over eighteen.



"Wonton," he barks. "Very good."

Up the street, in a Thai grocery, the owner, a woman wearing wide green silk pants, stands on a plastic milk crate, bowing and praying to a Buddha on top of her freezer. Two open glass jars of coconut milk are up there, too, with bowls of offerings, two lighted candles, and a burning stick of incense. The Buddha looks like Jesus of Nazareth, with a yellow sash across a white shift. The woman gasps, startled to find me staring. The only Western product in the grocery is Pringle's potato chips. There is dried octopus, with shrivelled suckers, in plastic bags. There are black preserved eggs from China. Duck eggs lie in sawdust, flies buzzing above. Sections of palm leaves are shockingly green among the dried and packaged merchandise.

The mothers watching children in the parks are the real power in Chinatown: many earn more than their husbands, who can no longer look on them as just baby machines. Remarkably, in this troubled community there is little drug use, AIDS, homelessness, or teen-age pregnancy. Here the major health problems are parasites; giardiasis, an intestinal ailment common in China, Cambodia, and Vietnam; hepatitis; malnutrition; anemia; and high cholesterol from oily foods.

On Grand Street, the nougat vender is out with her pushcart. In Little Italy, the feeling is different: people yell and argue in the streets, and fights break out. In Chinatown, no one yells or argues. It's too dangerous. Guns and cellular telephones are stashed all over Chinatown. Even gang members duck when a car backfires.

No one talks to me, a *low faan*, as I wander. I poke along Mulberry, notice an alley between two stores which is piled with boxes, and follow it into an inner courtyard backed by a decrepit low tenement—a "rear tenement." Wedged between its taller neighbors, it was put up before the building code was changed at the turn of the century. In the courtyard, a man in an apron is bending over a metal tub, stirring bloody tripe with his hands. He doesn't live here, he says. He lives with twelve other bachelors in a *gong si fong*. The courtyard is piled with bags of cement, barrels of brick dust, discarded wooden shipping boxes stamped "Dried Lotus Roots." It is a gritty, gray, forlorn place, a patch of old Chinatown more or less untouched since the eighteen-eighties.

The rear tenement, its windows broken or blackened with soot, its front door gone, looks uninhabited. Yet from a second-story window an ivy plant straggles. The stairway is nearly blocked with trash. Both ground-floor apartments are locked. I climb the stairs, expecting to find the second floor open to the sky and pigeons nesting. On the landing, a candle and two dusty balls of string, which on inspection turn out to be dried-up oranges, lie on the floor by a door. On the door, there is a red sign bright with gold calligraphy and happy dragons. The oranges and the sign grant blessings on everyone who enters this door.

I knock. A frail old man appears. He greets me quizzically. He has lived in Chinatown for sixty years, he says, and has never spoken to a white person.

—Gwen Kinkead

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

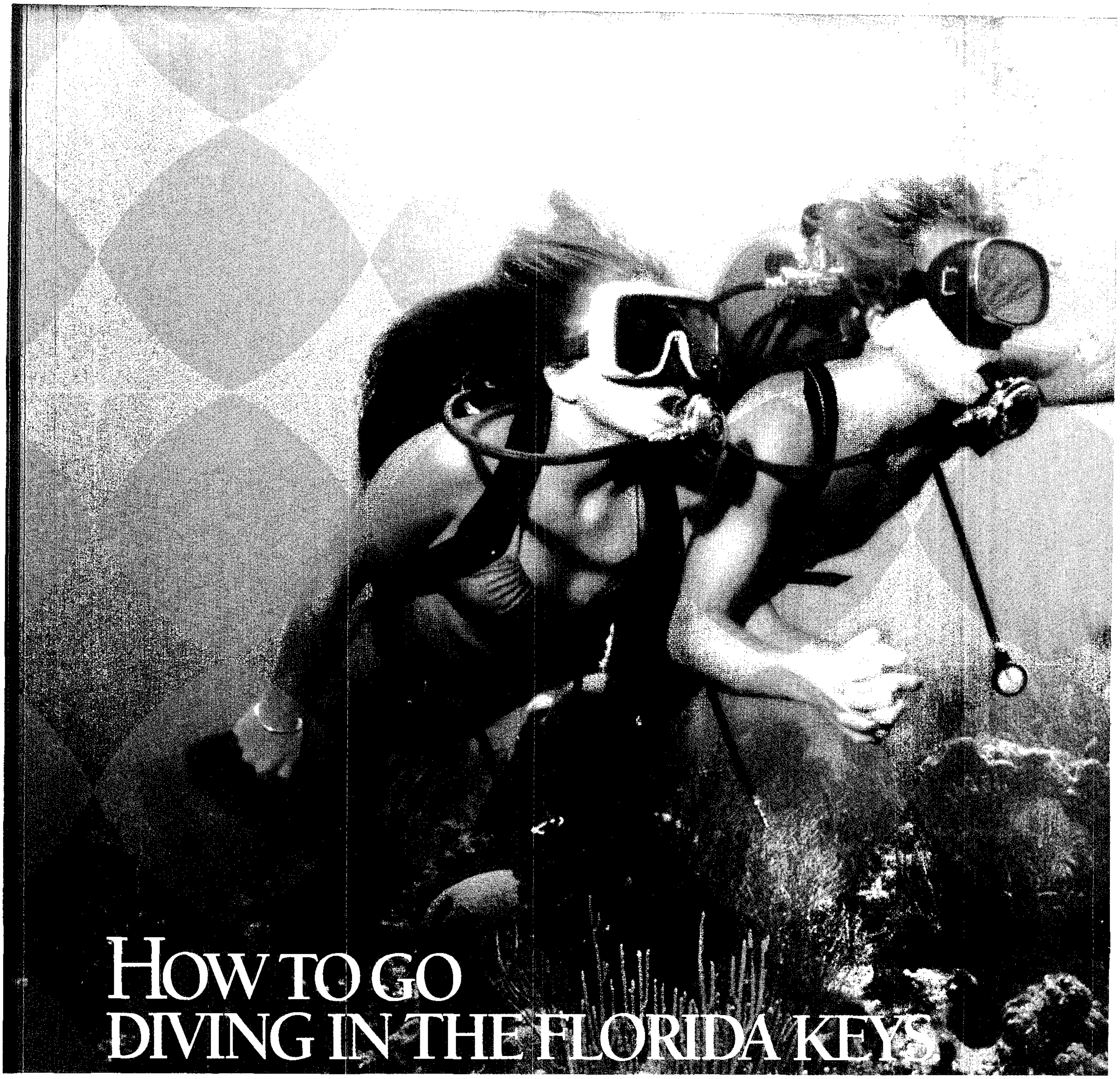
GREAT ESCAPES

Travelling America

There are Americans who dismiss travel in their own country because "it's not exotic enough." To them we can only say, clearly you've never seen the Corn Palace.

Rising like an onion-domed mirage above the plains of Mitchell, South Dakota, this monument to our agricultural heritage is decorated from base to tower with corn, sorghum, and other grains. In addition to its offbeat aesthetic appeal, the Corn Palace has a humanitarian function: it serves as a buffet for thousands of birds and small animals who might otherwise starve during the harsh South Dakota winters. Mitchell residents refer to it as "the world's largest bird feeder."

The Corn Palace—like the Oregon Vortex, Carhenge, and countless other off-the-wall attractions—exemplifies one of the great pleasures of travelling in America, the chance revel in our peculiar national consciousness. Foreign visitors are entertained by what they find here, but also confused. They wonder, for instance, why a seemingly sane man would devote his life to building a monument out of junked cars.



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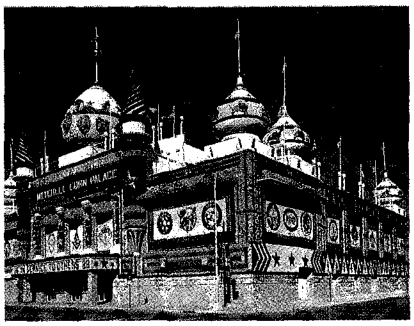
But Americans get the joke. More than that: around every corner, we discover ourselves.

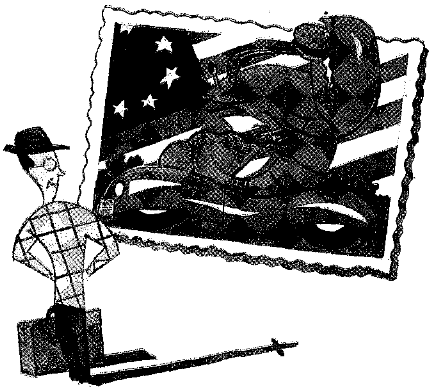
This is not to say that the United States is a single, homogeneous entity, something that can be understood in a week or a month. Each region is radically and exuberantly different. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that the place is so big. As French critic Jean Baudrillard commented, when "you set foot in America, you feel the presence of an entire continent—space there is the very form of thought."

It's a valid observation—but this particular "form of thought" comes more naturally to Americans than it did to Baudrillard. As a result, when you travel America you'll discover a country as exotic as the Outback, yet as familiar as a blue plate special.

Here are some highlights, although doubtless you'll discover your own.



The Corn Palace in South Dakota



NORTHEAST

From the Declaration of Independence to that staple of the national diet, the hamburger, the Northeast is the birthplace of things American. The former was penned in Philadelphia's Independence Hall, centerpiece of a mile-wide historic district that also contains the original Congress Hall, the Liberty Bell, and several Revolutionary-era residences; the latter was slapped together back in 1900 at a tiny brick snack joint in New Haven, Connecticut.

Today signers of the Declaration have scattered to the four winds, but descendants of the original hamburger chef still wow New Haven's lunchtime crowd. Similarly, Boston oyster houses are dishing up progeny of the juicy mollusks that Daniel Webster (and, later, John F. Kennedy) loved to guzzle, and Vermont, which celebrates its bicentennial in 1991, still taps its maples for the rich, dark syrup that has bathed generations of pancakes.

Other specialties of the Northeast that have become as indispensable to the idea of America as, well, apple pie, are Maine lobsters; Maryland soft-shelled crabs, served without plates (but with bibs for diners of all ages) on tables covered in brown paper; and the region's farm-fresh, summer-sweet fruits and vegetables.

Of course, the Northeast's attractions aren't all culinary. There are hundreds of bona fide sights, from the almost-a-mile-wide Delaware Water Gap to the gnarled, granite peaks of New Hampshire's White Mountains, from the mansions of Newport to the imposing buildings that house the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

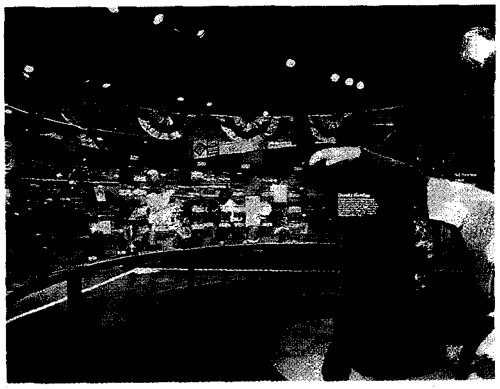
And then there are the landmarks that seem ordinary at first glance, yet acquire an almost mythic quality on closer examination. For instance, you can't claim to have lived until you've been to the Walt Whitman rest stop on the New Jersey Turnpike, preferably at three in the morning. Here, among the "New Jersey and You—Perfect Together" coffee mugs and inflatable neck pillows, is distilled the essence of America.

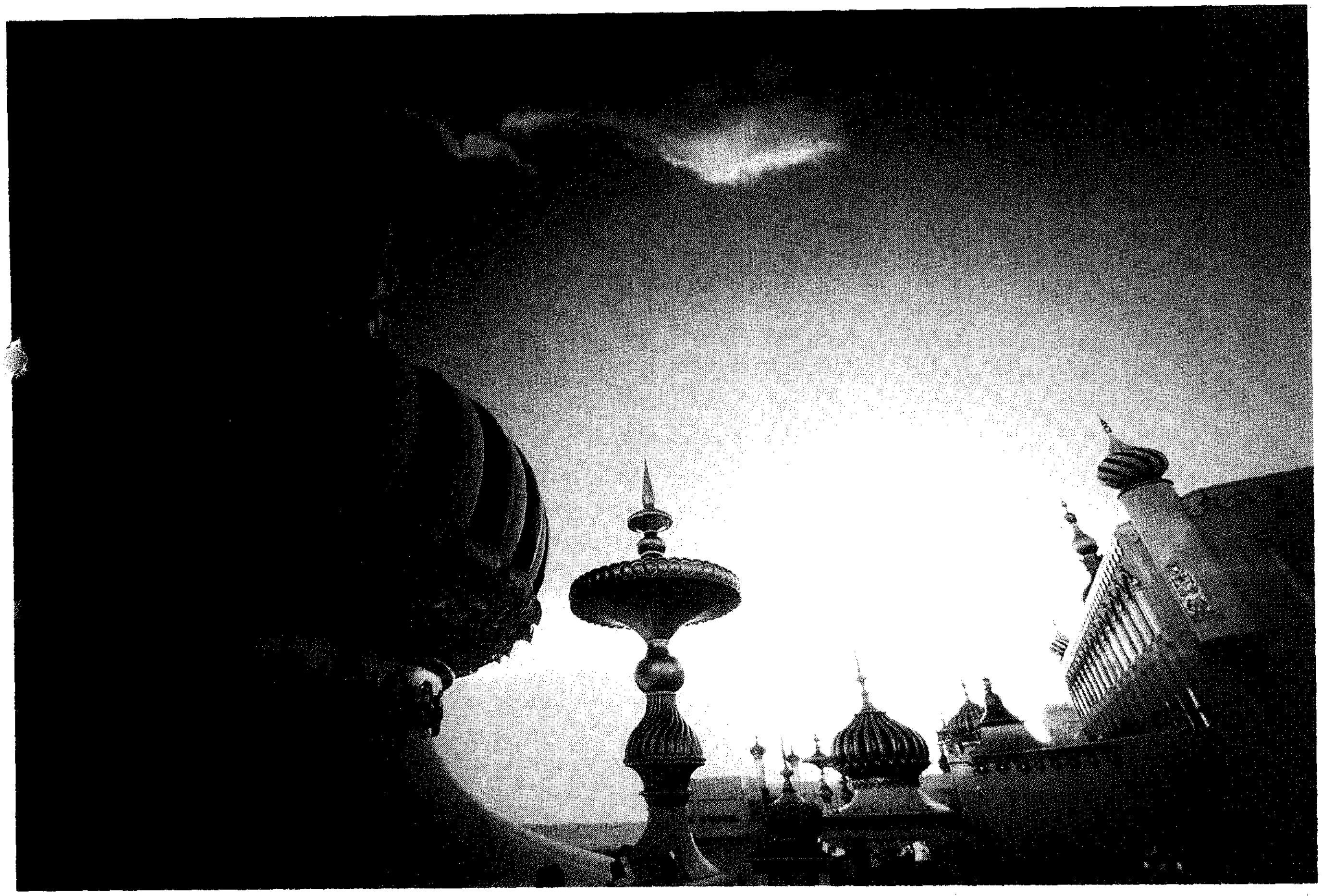
The Great American Pastime

Nothing captures the American imagination like sports. So it's no surprise that if you can kick it, bat it, volley it, or dunk it, there's a hall of fame in its honor.

The granddaddy of sports museums is the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Founded in 1939, it has four floors of exhibition space including a gallery devoted to the World Series.

It's a short drive from here to the Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York, which features a vast collection of photographs, memorabilia, and historic film footage. The Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, has all this and more: check out the "fountain" composed of a hundred tumbling basketballs. Finally, the Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island, is a tournament center and functioning tennis club as well as a museum. For many fans, playing here is a religious experience as you follow in the steps of Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, and Martina Navratilova.





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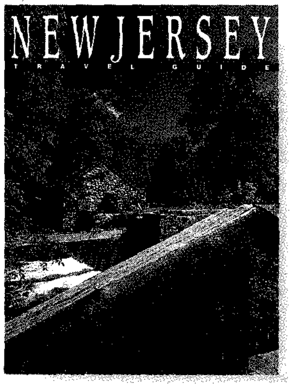

NEW JERSEY
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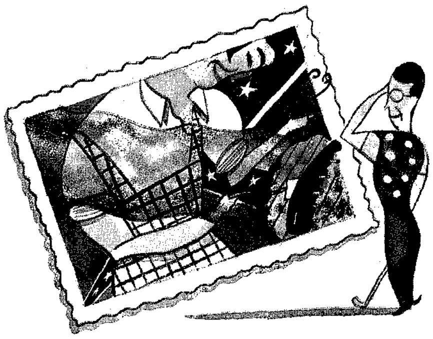


SOUTHEAST

The states south of the Mason-Dixon line share two important attributes: Confederate history and great pork barbecue.

Both are evident in Richmond, Virginia, capital of the state and former capital of the Confederacy. Entering the Museum of the Confederacy here is like stepping back in time; on every side, you're surrounded by the artifacts, sights, and sounds of the Civil War. As you walk through the exhibits and visit the adjoining White House of the Confederacy, once the home of Jefferson Davis (still known locally as "President Davis"), it's almost as though you can still hear the blare of trumpets sounding the retreat.

Another chapter in the Civil War saga is recorded in rural Kentucky, at the birthplace of Davis's rival, Abraham Lincoln. The famous log cabin has been enshrined in a large granite memorial about forty miles south of Louisville, near the woods where Lincoln played as a child.

For all their significance, neither Davis's house nor Lincoln's holds a candle to the great plantation mansions of the Southeast, many of which are preserved in their antebellum splendor. Visitors to Boone Hall in Charleston, South Carolina, Houmas House near New Orleans, or the nineteenth-century estates outside Natchez, Mississippi, will feel like they've stumbled onto the set of "Gone with the Wind." (Tara, by the way, never existed except in Margaret Mitchell's imagination.)

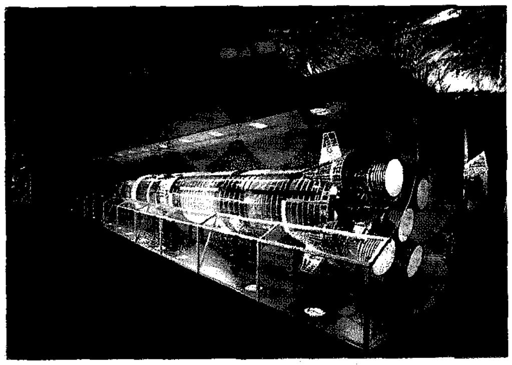
A number of plantations and historic homes in towns like Savannah, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama, and Raleigh, North Carolina, have been converted into inns. Here travellers receive a welcome reminiscent of an earlier age, with niceties like lemonade and homemade cookies to refresh you after your journey.

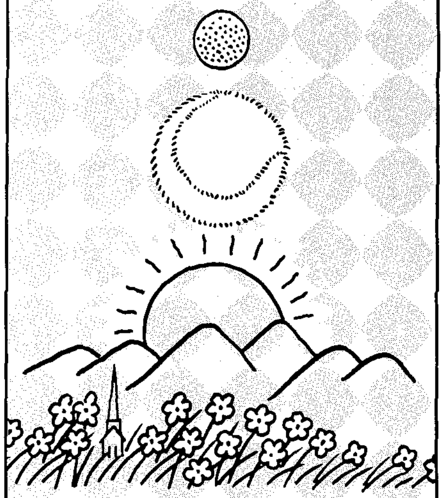
The Final Frontier

Florida's east central area is known as "the Space Coast," not because its inhabitants have been out in the sun too long, but because it's home to the Kennedy Space Center and Spaceport USA.

From the moment you enter the Spaceport, you'll know you're in the presence of an American dream. This message is reinforced everywhere you look, from the patriotic artwork to a forty-minute multiscreen IMAX film, "The Dream Is Alive."

For the complete experience, walk through the exhibition galleries and take a two-hour bus tour of the Space Center to view the laboratories, launch pads, and lunar modules. Then cool out on twenty-five miles of beaches at the nearby Canaveral National Seashore.





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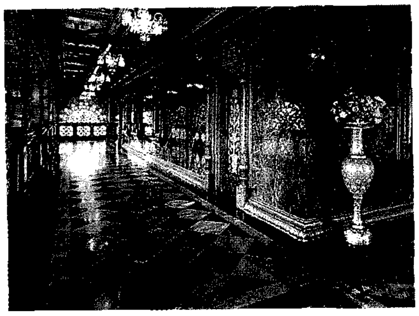
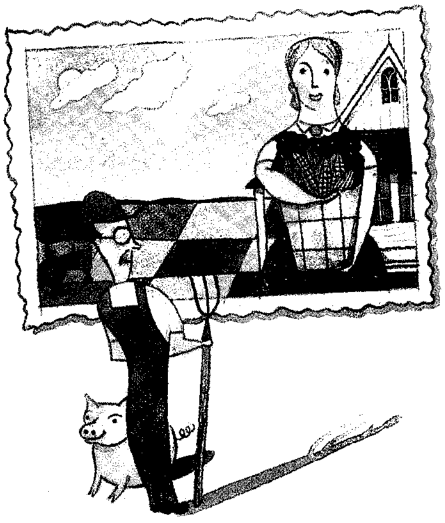


Opulent India can be found in West Virginia

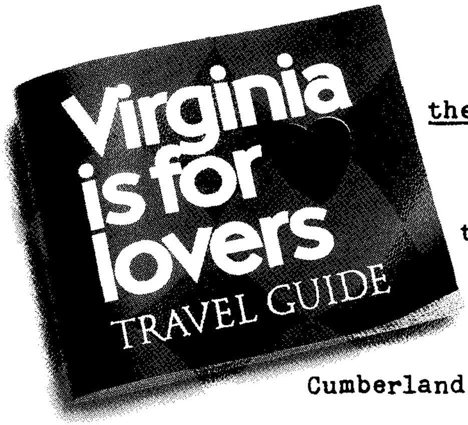
All this civility doesn't mean Southerners lack a sense of humor, however. It takes a uniquely playful sensibility to come up with the Frog Fantasies Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, or Prabhupada's Palace of Gold, West Virginia's answer to the Taj Mahal. And how about the Museum of Beverage Containers, the most popular attraction in Goodlettsville, Tennessee (north of Nashville)? With over thirty thousand cans and bottles, it's indisputably the real thing.



MIDWEST

Stretching from the Great Lakes to the Great Plains, this area has been called the Heartland, the Bread Basket, the Dust Bowl, and countless other names too colorful to print.

It's easy to grow frustrated with the Midwest, for the simple reason that you can't push it around. The region is too big, too temperamental



Virginia is for lovers TRAVEL GUIDE

p. 22: Enter the Mountain Empire.

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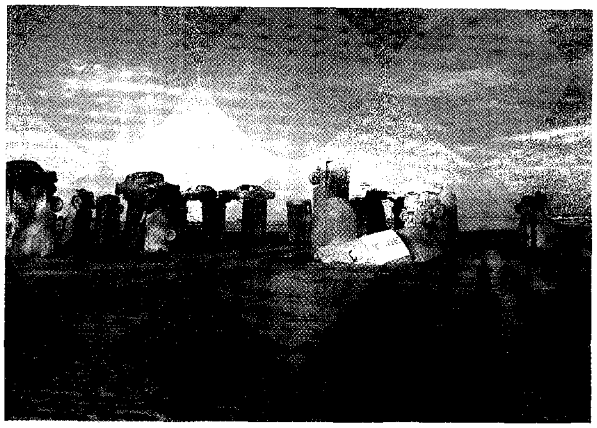
Carhenge



Modern-day Druids looking for a home should hop the next Greyhound to Alliance, Nebraska. As they approach the town on Route 385, they'll see a familiar silhouette rising in the distance.

In size and design, Alliance's version of Stonehenge is almost identical to the monument on England's Salisbury Plain. Only the materials differ: instead of stone, the megaliths are gray-painted automobiles.

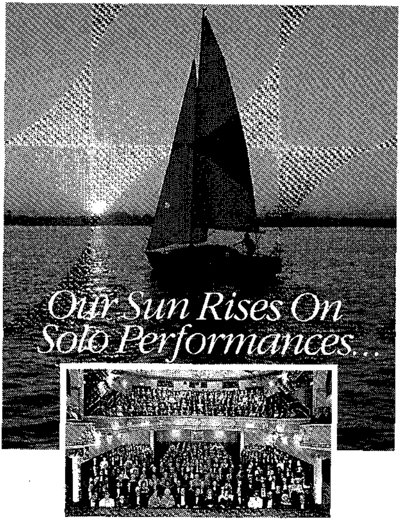
Carhenge, as it is known, is the magnum opus of a geologist named Jim Reinders. Impressed by the grandeur of Stonehenge on a visit to the British Isles, he decided to create an American counterpart using junkyard-bound vehicles. The result is as overwhelming as the original, in its own way. It's open to the public daily, with a picnic and Druidic bonfire the night of the summer solstice (which is usually June 22nd).

(a twister powerful enough to blow Dorothy to Oz couldn't have happened anywhere but Kansas), and too complex. Travellers end up using backhanded superlatives to describe it, as in "This is the flattest (or windiest, or emptiest) place I've ever seen."

To get to know the region, it's essential first to surrender your expectations. You're probably not going to find what you're looking for here—on the other hand, you may run across something infinitely better. City dwellers expecting a tranquil interlude in sparsely populated North or South Dakota find themselves overwhelmed, and a little disturbed, by the vast expanses of earth and sky. Drivers who think of Iowa as an endless series of cornfields are charmed by old roads winding through green hills and blossom-filled meadows.

Culture buffs used to turning up their noses at regional offerings are in for a special shock. By now, everyone knows that Chicago has a world-class art, performance, and music scene — but what about Minneapolis's thriving theatre row, the Impressionist collection at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Indianapolis's Walker Theatre, and the St. Louis Symphony? What about North America's largest and most prestigious free jazz festival, which is held every Labor Day in Detroit, Michigan?

Finally, those who expect stodgy homogeneity will be surprised by towns like Madison, Wisconsin, where yuppies, punk rockers, and Marxists coexist peacefully with good ol' boys and Bible-toting fundamentalists. New York and Los Angeles seem positively provincial by comparison.



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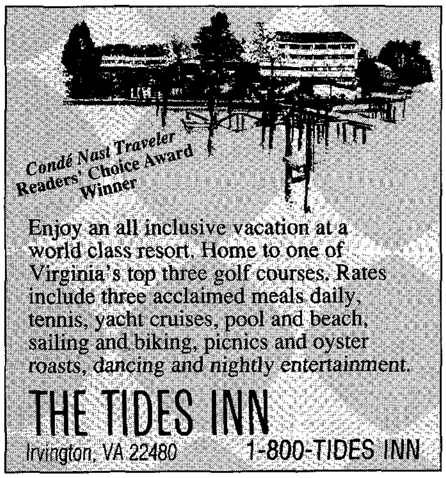

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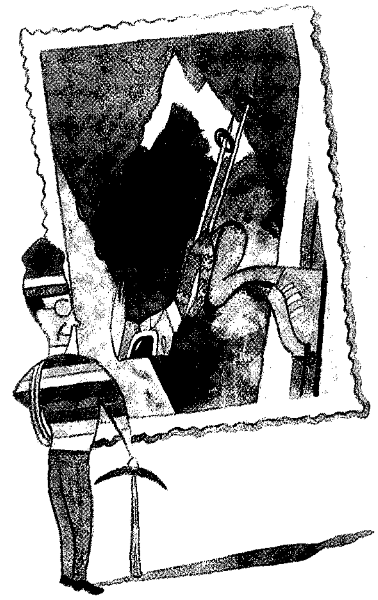

MOUNTAIN STATES

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Although there are breathtaking views around every corner, the best way to explore the region is through the National Park System. Since 1872, Congress has been setting aside areas of natural or cultural significance for public enjoyment, creating what John Muir called "the people's playgrounds." Today there are about eighty million acres to play in, much of it in the West.

The oldest and most famous of the parks is Yellowstone, which is mostly in Wyoming but stretches into Montana and Idaho and is surrounded by national forests. Most first-time visitors see highlights of the

Fog over Redfish Lake, Idaho

p. 10: Don't just visit an 18th century tavern. Eat there.

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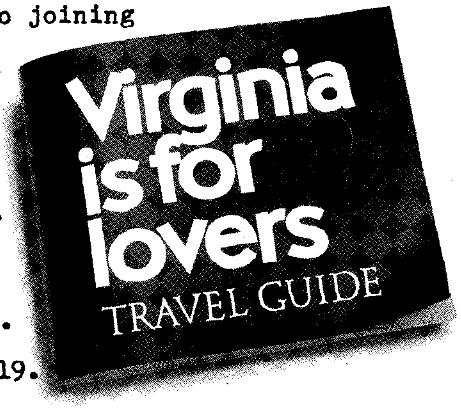

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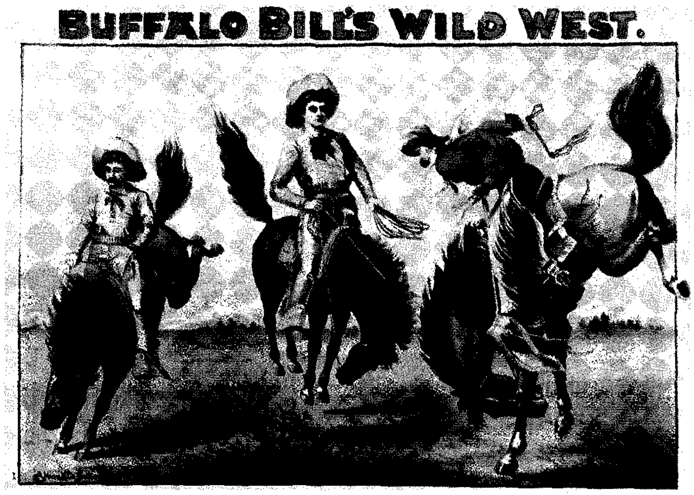
two-million-acre park on the Grand Loop, a 145-mile drive that runs by Old Faithful, Mammoth Hot Springs, and Yellowstone Lake; to escape the crowds, take detours onto secondary roads like the Virginia Cascade Drive between Norris and Canyon junctions (spectacular waterfall views) and the Fountain Flats Drive from Madison Junction to Old Faithful, which passes the dramatic Midway Geyser Basin.

Although only one-tenth the size of Yellowstone, Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park is equally inspiring. As Naturalist Enos Mills wrote in his 1917 guidebook, "Your National Parks," its "magnificent mountains . . . form a horizon that seems to be part of the scenery of the sky"— it will take your breath away.

As with Yellowstone, the meeting of earth and sky can be best appreciated if you get off the beaten track. Three hundred miles of hiking trails lead to lesser-known attractions like Tyndall Glacier, which still moves at a rate of about three feet a year. You can also take trail rides across the Continental Divide, bicycle on Trail Ridge Road, or go ski touring in the glacier basin of Sprague Lake.

For the ultimate wilderness experience, head further west to Idaho's Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Less well known than the national parks, it comprises three-quarters of a million acres of jagged peaks, forests, hot springs, rushing rivers—and blessed silence.


BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST.

Buffalo Bill Museum

It took a unique combination of guts, imagination, and bravado to tame the Wild West; William (Buffalo Bill) Cody had all three. At various times in his life he was a Pony Express rider, Indian scout, soldier with the U.S. Cavalry, actor, and showman.

Cody's most famous project was the Buffalo Bill Wild West extravaganza, which travelled around the country showcasing performers like Sitting Bull, Annie Oakley, and Bill himself. Part circus, part educational tool, it introduced thousands of Americans to the legends and lore of the Western region.

The Buffalo Bill Memorial Museum has kitschy show posters and costumes from the Wild West show, including props and guns; there's also a fine collection of Western art, with works by Frederic Remington and Charles Schreyvogel. It's worth a visit for its location alone, next to Cody's grave site on spectacular Lookout Mountain in Colorado.

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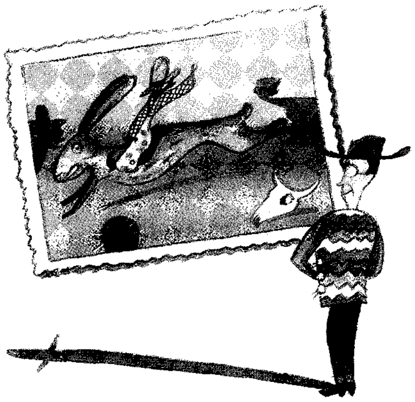

SOUTHWEST

"Texas is undeniable," wrote Jack Kerouac in "On the Road." It's true: the Southwest overwhelms travellers with sheer size and muscle. Whether you're gaping at Arizona's Grand Canyon or sitting down to a man-sized meal in a Dallas steakhouse, there's a constant sense that you're being challenged.

The test takes different forms. In New Mexico it's the vastness of the lands west of Albuquerque, with their sun-scorched mesas and ghostly lava beds. In Oklahoma it's the desert plain once called the Trail of Tears, where thousands of Native Americans were relocated after being displaced from the Southeast (sixty years later they were forced to move again when white settlers flooded the territory).

In Texas, the weather is part of the challenge: most parts of the state have two seasons, summer and February. The towering glass boxes of Houston and Dallas strain the limits of the imagination, sprouting out of the flat plains like a futurist fantasy.

In Utah, part of the trick is acclimating yourself to the customs of the native Mormons, whose world headquarters in Salt Lake City are a sight to behold. Wander through the gardens of ten-acre Temple Square (non-Mormons aren't permitted to enter the Temple itself) and visit the Mormon Tabernacle, a flying-saucer-shaped building that houses the famous choir.

What may be the supreme test takes place in Las Vegas, Nevada, where nature meets civilization with

p. 21: Where the daughter of the stars meets the mother of presidents.

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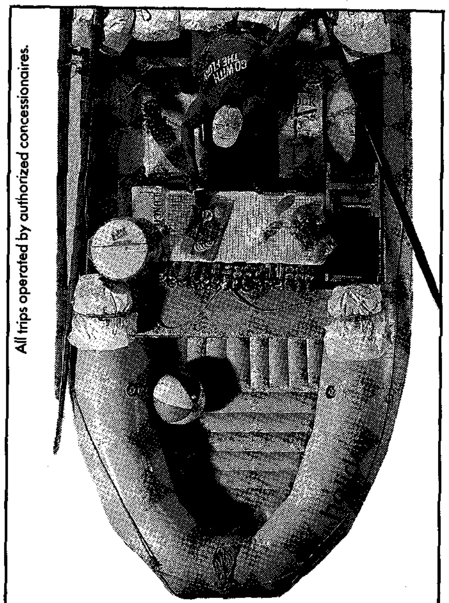

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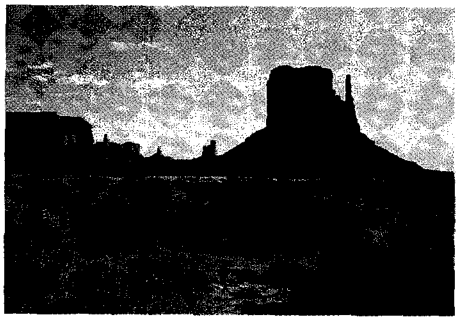
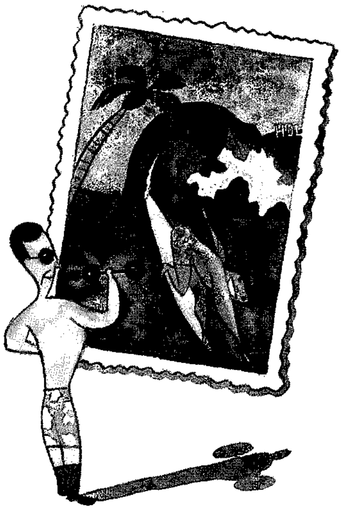


The Navajo Nation

Window Rock, Arizona, is the seat of the largest Native American reservation in America. From here you can explore seventeen million acres of Navajo territory in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, including the Navajo National Monument, which preserves the largest and most intricate thirteenth-century Indian cliff dwellings.

Continue on to Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, which stretches into the state of Utah. The park's canyons, gorges, high mesas, and natural arches will look familiar to movie buffs: it's a favorite location for Westerns, including some early John Wayne films.

a resounding crash. Travellers can't help but feel disoriented when they drive past the screaming neon of the strip into the tremendous, waiting silence of the land outside: it's like diving into deep water. But as with any challenge worth taking, the successful transit from one to the other leaves you exhilarated — lightheaded, even — with the sense of your own accomplishment.



WEST

Although the term "melting pot" was first applied to East Coast cities, it's equally appropriate to the West. As the East once looked to Europe, this region looks to the Orient, with a steady influx of Asian immigrants.

Chinese New Year is festive in San Francisco

The result is a vibrant ethnic mix in cities like San Francisco and Seattle, where the International District boasts a Buddhist temple and an enormous Asian department store. To the north, in Alaska, the mix is enriched by Native American peoples such as the Aleuts, Tlingits, Eskimos, and Haidas. Thanks to the abundance of natural resources, these tribes are able to live with something approaching the autonomy Native Americans enjoyed centuries ago in other parts of the country.

To the south, the stew takes on a peppery flavor courtesy of the Mexicans and Hispanic Americans who have established thriving communities in Los Angeles, San Diego, and smaller cities like Palm Springs, California. Here the burrito is as popular as the hamburger, and Spanish city names are pronounced as they should be: none of this "Los Angle-ees" stuff.

In Hawaii, the cultures of Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam have melded with local traditions to form appealing new combinations, affecting everything from state holidays to island cuisine. Here, the luau, the hula, and the muumuu are augmented by nouvelle tropicale cuisine that incorporates local fruits and vegetables and fresh fish, keeping Polynesian traditions alive in the modern metropolis of Honolulu.

The Oregon Vortex

Described in a guidebook as "one of the oldest and most respected weird places in America," this spot combines an odd natural phenomenon with a showmanship that's uniquely American.

One of several such locations on the American continent, the Vortex is a patch of land on which the forces of nature have gone awry. The resulting magnetic pulls affect visitors in strange ways. For instance, you'll appear to shrink or grow six inches, depending on where you stand, and at certain spots it's extremely difficult to keep your balance.

There's no question that the Vortex is real: animals avoid it, and Native Americans referred to it as "the Forbidden Ground." But for many visitors, the site's main appeal is its glorious kitschiness.

A "House of Mystery" has been built within the eerie circular area; you'll find it almost impossible to stand upright on the tilting floors, further proof that the Vortex is "Natural* Historical* Educational* Scientific* Authentic" (as the sign says) in addition to just plain weird. There's also a well-stocked gift shop with postcards, bumper stickers, and pseudo-scientific pamphlets sporting titles like "Notes and Data Relative to the Phenomena at the Area of the House of Mystery."

Deborah Gaines is a New York–based travel writer.

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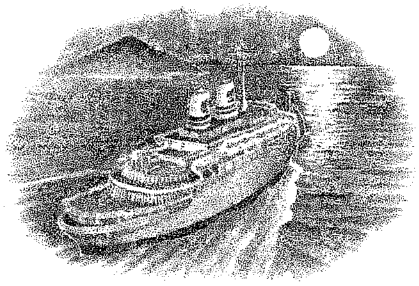

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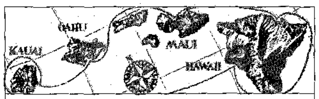

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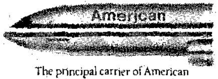

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

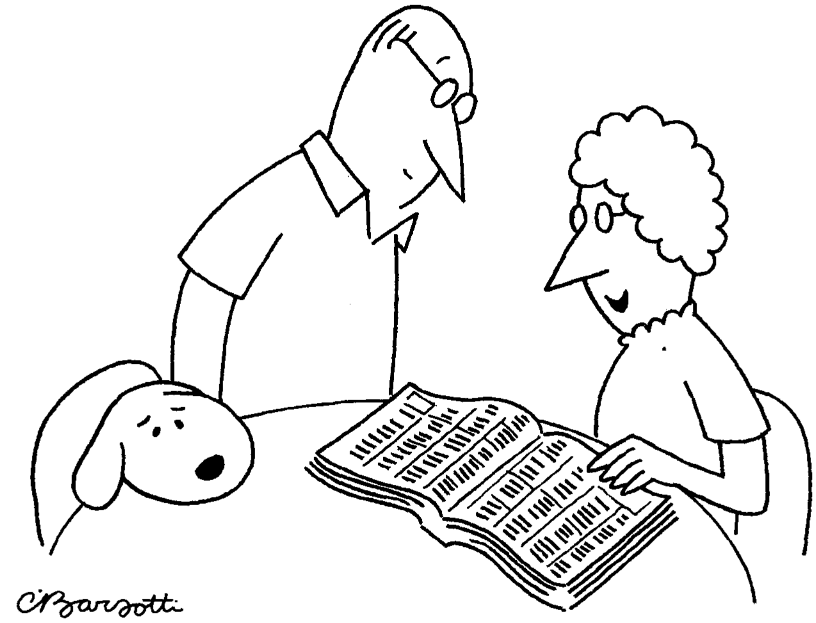
Skin Deep

SPIKE LEE's new movie, "Jungle Fever," has, as all his pictures do, an air of importance. Lee is America's most prominent black filmmaker, and his subject here is an explosive one: interracial sex. The story, whose central event is the love affair of a married African-American architect from Harlem and an Italian-American office temp from Bensonhurst, might seem to afford Lee the opportunity to examine racial attitudes in a more intimate way than he has done in the past—to go beyond the public posturing and street-life confrontations of "Do the Right Thing," into the murkier neighborhood of the heart. His script never does cross the border into that dangerous territory, though; the movie keeps swerving around its main characters' emotions as if they were land mines. Once Lee has set up the interracial relationship, between Flipper (Wesley Snipes) and Angie (Annabella Sciorra), he seems to lose interest in it. Flipper and Angie's attraction to each other develops quickly, in the course of a few late nights at the office, which Lee presents as a series of very brief scenes dissolving into one another. Flirtatious conversations over takeout dinners culminate in an impulsive, rushed act of love on Flipper's drafting table, and when the sex is finished Lee treats us to a bleakly ominous overhead shot of their motionless, entwined bodies. (He shoots this postcoital embrace the way De Palma shoots the aftermath of a particularly sordid murder.)

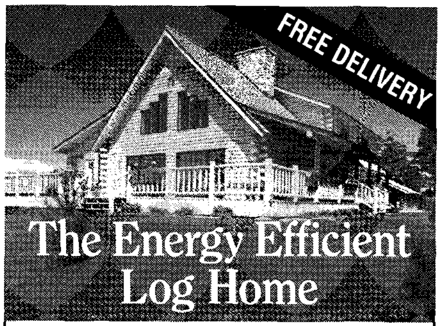
Once the business of establishing the premise has been taken care of, the movie backs away from the lovers, and Lee retreats to more familiar turf. He wastes no time getting the affair out in the open, where it can provoke horrified reactions from the families and friends of the misbehavers. Flipper's wife, Drew (Lonette McKee), gets wind of her husband's infidelity almost immediately, push comes to shove, and Flipper finds himself out on the street, surrounded by his belongings. And when Angie's father hears that she's involved with a black man he gives her a beating and then banishes her from home. Just like that, the focus of "Jungle Fever" shifts from the lovers to their communities, from the private to the public, from the bedroom to the street. The outcast lovers take an apartment together, but we're rarely given a glimpse of how they relate to each other when they're alone in their refuge, and we never see them make love again. This impersonal, virtually empty apartment, in which nothing important happens, seems to stand for the imaginative void at the center of the movie. Flipper and Angie hold the stage only long enough to ignite the fears and hatreds of their communities, and when the fuse has been lit their job is done.

It's difficult not to feel that Lee has really missed a chance in "Jungle Fever"—a chance to reveal, through his characters' sexuality, the subtle, day-to-day emotional consequences of racial misunderstanding, to probe the internal wounds that aren't always acknowledged. But his approach to this material is stubbornly, and perversely, external: he applies the broad, mural-like strokes of "Do the Right Thing" to a subject that demands a finer touch, a greater attentiveness to the complexities and ambiguities of human behavior. We never have the sense, in this movie, that we're getting inside anyone's skin (white or black), that we've been given access to the characters' innermost thoughts and desires. Everything here is pitched at the level of public utterance: even in private, Lee's people speak in zingers. The dialogue has the rhetorical tone of daytime-television confessional jamborees like "Geraldo" and "Sally Jessy Raphael," where guests and members of the audience try to top one another with home truths and moral outrage, and whoever gets the biggest round of applause wins.

This talk-show style of discourse is all right when it's used for comic effect, or when (as in "Do the Right Thing") it merges with the jiving, taunting verbal style of the street, where in-your-face assertiveness is a value. It's a disastrous style for "Jungle Fever," though: even in the most intense, emotionally charged domestic scenes, there's an alienating self-consciousness in the way the characters express themselves—they always look as if they had an ear cocked for audience response. In the first serious conversation between Flipper and Drew after she has kicked him out, they deal with their marital crisis in a bizarre manner: instead of talking about, say, the effect their separation is having on their young daughter, they launch into a rather abstract discussion of the finer points of skin color. Drew, whose mother was white, is much lighter than Flipper; she accuses him of having always really wanted a white woman. Clearly, the fact that Flipper's mistress is white adds insult to the injury of his infidelity, but it's disconcerting that Drew's rage seems to be focussed more on the insult than on the injury. Not long before this odd scene,



"Oh, look at this one—it offers grooming and inside and outside runs."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the movie has shown us Drew and several of her women friends (most of whom have been dragged onto the screen for this sequence alone) holding forth on the issue of interracial sex: whether "white bitches" throw themselves at black men, whether black women should ever date white men, and so on. The sequence, which goes on for quite a while, plays like a clip from an "Oprah" show, and it's puzzling psychologically. What does it mean that Drew has translated her personal anguish into generalities, policy statements? At one point in the movie, Flipper looks at his father, the Reverend Purify (Ossie Davis), whose speech consists entirely of scriptural quotations and hellfire sermonizing, and asks, in exasperation, "Do you ever just *talk*?" That's a question that might be addressed to every one of the characters in "Jungle Fever."

The rhetorical barrage that Lee unleashes here gives the picture a peculiar, halting rhythm: individual scenes have force and momentum, but the movie as a whole seems stalled, inert, uncertain where it's headed. The affair between Flipper and Angie dawdles to an anticlimactic, underdramatized parting, and we feel nothing; emotionally, the movie has separated them from each other, and from us, long before. Their relationship has a muffled, joyless quality throughout: there's no heat, no passion in it—barely even the thrill of curiosity about making love with someone of another race. The most shocking thing about "Jungle Fever" is that Lee, who demonstrated in previous films a talent for steamy and original love scenes, seems terribly puritanical about interracial sex. It's as if he were afraid that any hint of eroticism would constitute an endorsement of Flipper and Angie's affair. And, as a public figure, he's extremely careful about what positions he appears to be taking. (As an artist, he should show us everything he knows and let us sort out our own feelings.) After their initial encounter, his lovers settle into a bland politeness with each other; even Snipes, who was a powerful sexual presence in last year's "Mo' Better Blues," seems neutered. Lee keeps cutting away from their scenes together, diverting our attention to situations that allow him to make confident, unambiguous statements. The scenes that feature Flipper's crackhead brother, Gator (Samuel L. Jackson), have more energy than anything else in the picture. Gator's story has no impact on his brother's romantic troubles, and it's tangential to the movie's central theme, but Lee's determination to show us the devastation that drugs have produced in poor black neighborhoods (combined, perhaps, with his desire to answer those who criticized him for failing to confront the issue in "Do the Right Thing") gives these passages some shape and dramatic coherence. And this subplot, unlike the main plot, actually has a climax.

Everything else in "Jungle Fever" is either vague or simply stale: ideas that Lee hasn't worked out yet or ideas that he has worked out thoroughly in other movies. The Bensonhurst sequences—which also feature John Turturro, as Angie's dweeby neighborhood boyfriend, and Anthony Quinn, as his racist, sexist Italian papa—have the flavor of warmed-over slices from Sal's pizza parlor in "Do the Right Thing." At times, all that keeps "Jungle Fever" going is the inventiveness of Ernest Dickerson's cinematography and the lilting rhythmic virtuosity of Stevie Wonder's soundtrack songs. The movie dances around its theme for over two hours, and then comes to an abrupt stop, its hero standing on a Harlem street corner and letting rip a tremendous, echoing scream. Presumably, this is a cry of frustration: after all the storm and stress of his recent life, Flipper doesn't seem to have got anywhere—he still doesn't know where he is or where he's going, and he has only the haziest notion of where he has been. At this moment (at last), we can identify with Lee's hero: we thought we were venturing into new areas of experience, but we've just been running in place.

LEE's movie is a mess, but it's the sort of mess that sends the audience out of the theatre thinking and arguing; as exercises in futility go, it's fairly stimulating. We're now heading into the summer-movie season, when most of the new studio releases are feel-good entertainments, and these pictures, even when they succeed in evoking some kind of audience response, can be more alienating than ambitious failures like Lee's: Hollywood's notion of what's likely to make us feel good can be pretty disquieting. "City Slickers," which is being touted by the entertainment-news media as a possible summer blockbuster, is a perfect example. It's a depressingly efficient piece of product. The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is in the comedy-with-heart mode of their 1989 hit "Parenthood"; that is, it alternates banal life lessons with medium-speed wisecracking. The hero, Mitch Robbins (Billy Crystal), is a thirty-nine-year-old New York family man who's going through a killer midlife crisis: he shuffles dispiritedly from home to work (he sells commercial time for a radio station) and back, and wonders if this secure everyday monotony is indeed all there is. His wife (Patricia Wettig, of "thirtysomething") gets so fed up with his moping that she virtually orders him to take a vacation with his buddies, Ed (Bruno Kirby) and Phil (Daniel Stern); Ed, a daredevil, macho type, has arranged for them to spend two weeks on a real cattle drive out West. Mitch's wife looks him in the eye and says earnestly, "Go and find your smile." Something tells us that he *will* find that darn smile, and that the movie will give us a huge, juicy closeup of it.

Ninety minutes later, there it is, a grin as big as all outdoors. Mitch arrives home, flashes it for his wife and kids, and that's that. His pals have picked up the odd nugget of wisdom along the trail, too: henpecked Phil has learned that he can stand up for himself and take charge of his life; Ed has worked through his unresolved feelings about his alcoholic father and is well on the way to conquering his lifelong fear of emotional commitment. The audience I saw "City Slickers" with seemed to be having a good time; it didn't appear to be troubled by the predictability or the clunkiness of the tenderfoot gags (sore behinds, stampedes, and the like), or even by the long, ludicrous passages of group-therapy-on-the-range. The director, Ron Underwood, whose last picture was the goofy 1990 horror comedy "Tremors" (which was much more fun), keeps the whole thing rolling at a steady, amiable clip, but the smiles I found along the way were tiny, tiny ones: Jack Palance, as Curly, the trail boss, manages some dry, macabre comic effects, and the animals are good—they're interesting to look at, and they don't make bad jokes. You can't help sympathizing with the cattle in "City Slickers"; by the time the movie is over, you know what it feels like to be part of the herd. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

JUNE 6

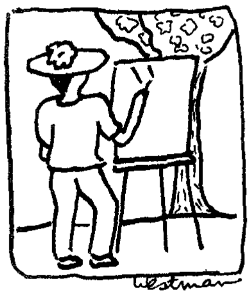
THE current controversy over the anti-job-discrimination civil-rights bill is only in part about civil rights. It is also about the searing racial tensions that have developed in this country, making race our most divisive and explosive domestic issue. It is about politicians attempting to deal with the competing pressures of racial minorities trying to further, consolidate, or salvage gains made in the past three decades and of the white majority putting up increasing resistance. It is about some politicians trying to gain advantage from the racial tensions. It is about lawyers and other advocates haggling over legal niceties and confusing everyone else in the process and losing track of what the issue really is. Because of these factors, the furor over the issue is out of proportion to the importance of the bill itself. But the furor has its own importance. The way the issue is being handled in Washington at the moment isn't a pretty sight, and is damaging the country even further. The tragedy is that this wasn't necessary.

No area of civil-rights policy is as neuralgic as the one that governs discrimination in employment. The reasons are manifold: anti-job-discrimination policy gets to such matters as the government's intruding on an employer's right to hire and fire and putting the employer at risk of lawsuits over his employment practices; the pitting of one racial group against another in the competition for jobs; and simple (if unacknowledged) racial prejudice. The remedies for proven racial discrimination in hiring can work to the disadvantage of innocent whites. The current agony over job discrimination grows out of a law passed in the halcyon days of the civil-rights movement. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination by employers with fifteen or more employees in hiring on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. That was the easy part. For the next few years, plaintiffs who thought they had been discriminated against could bring suits. The plaintiff had to prove intentional discrimination, or "disparate treatment," and the remedies included court orders to stop the discrimination; reinstatement; and up to two years of back pay, plus attorneys' fees. (Later, a court decision construed an old Reconstruction statute to allow unlimited damages to victims of intentional race discrimination.) Then, in 1971, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision called Griggs v. Duke Power Co., greatly broadened the sweep of Title VII by saying that plaintiffs no longer had to prove *intentional* discrimination but would have grounds for suing if hiring practices had a discriminatory effect, or "disparate impact." The application of the "disparate impact" theory is really what the current fight is all about.

"*Myrna! Feel sorry for Mrs. DeStefano. She's never read Eudora Welty.*"

Some civil-rights lawyers say that the Griggs decision was to employment discrimination what the Brown decision was to school segregation. Griggs opened up employment discrimination to class-action suits. Under Griggs, a plaintiff couldn't simply charge that the racial (or gender) makeup of the work force of a given company was *significantly* at variance with the *qualified* applicant pool but also had to point to the employment practice or practices—a supposedly neutral test, a certain education requirement, a height requirement, and so on—that might have led to the disparity. (In the Griggs case, involving a power-generating company in North Carolina, the employer was judged to have required tests and high-school diplomas for obtaining entry-level jobs for which such credentials weren't necessary, with the effect of excluding blacks.) The Griggs decision further held that the employer could prevail if he proved the "business necessity" of such a practice, and it went on to give varying formulations of how to define "business necessity": "significantly related to successful job performance," or "manifest relationship to the employment in question," or bearing a "demonstrable relationship to successful performance of the jobs." In the years following the Griggs decision, there were numerous court cases that leaned on different interpretations of "business necessity." Twenty years after Griggs, the fight is ostensibly over what terminology should apply to defining the relevance of the employment practice—but it is actually about a lot of other things.

The Griggs decision did lead to class-action suits and was relied upon in numerous cases to strike down effective discrimination by race or gender. Controversial decisions led to substantially increased minority employment in municipal fire and police departments. In some cases where the courts decided that there had been past discrimination, or where there was significant underrepresentation of minorities and women in certain jobs, they ordered employers to adopt "goals," and "timetables" for meeting those goals. Thus, the courts ordered employers to undertake "affirmative action," if the employers had not already done so voluntarily—in order to avoid a lawsuit. The employers were required to make a "good-faith effort" to meet those goals—but weren't absolutely required to meet them if it proved impractical. (In one case, where the Supreme Court found repeated non-compliance with court orders, it ordered a rigid mathematical formula.) For decades, the federal government has mandated that federal contractors meet certain goals in employing minorities, and has reserved contracts in certain fields for minority-owned businesses.



One of the problems in the whole current debate about "quotas" is that different camps mean different things when they use the term. To civil-rights advocates, a goal, or a numerical remedy, is not a "quota," because people aren't being told to hire an *unqualified* worker, or to hire an absolute number. Though President Bush has said in the past that he supports affirmative action with goals but not quotas, the Administration now argues in effect that a goal is a quota—that an affirmative-action program can be a quota program because it *may lead* an employer to adopt a quota, hiring *less qualified* workers to meet the numerical goal. This is a radical view, which could undo decades of affirmative-action programs, including in government contracts. To the Administration, being compelled to hire a less qualified worker is a quota; to civil-rights advocates, other things being equal, or even if a given worker is somewhat less qualified, taking race into account in order to meet a numerical goal is appropriate affirmative action. (Some civil-rights advocates wouldn't mind quotas at all, thinking they are the only fair way to make up for past discrimination, but in the current climate they don't argue this aloud.) To many minds, anything that smacks of numerical equivalencies by race or gender is a quota, because as a practical matter the only way to avoid burdensome and expensive lawsuits is to hire by the numbers. (Nevertheless, numerous businesses have learned to live comfortably with affirmative action and goals.) Civil-rights advocates think that their opponents are under the misapprehension that employers are being told to hire *unqualified* workers, or to meet a rigid numerical standard, whereas for many opponents the real objection is to being told that they have to hire according to any numerical standard at all.

These are among the many ways in which participants in the debate are talking past each other. And while civil-rights lawyers can talk in cool and balanced terms about affirmative action and its justifications, and its lack of rigidity, many white workers have become inflamed and enraged at the idea that they might not get a job or promotion because of society's *past* discrimination against blacks. They feel that they are being passed over for less qualified workers, whether they are or not. To the extent that whites have not received jobs or promotions, or think that they won't receive jobs or promotions, because of affirmative-action programs, a tremendous backlash against "reverse discrimination" has set in. Exploitation of this backlash has become a staple of our current politics, with a declining economy providing fertile ground.

Though the Administration asserts that the effect of the Griggs decision was to lead—or threaten to lead—employers to hire by the numbers in order to avoid an employment-discrimination suit, it offers no hard evidence to support this claim. No doubt many employers do engage in affirmative action in order to ward off lawsuits, and perhaps assign themselves quotas, or something close to them. Actually, this is what civil-rights advocates want employers to do, in order to give minorities more opportunity. It's probably blinking at reality

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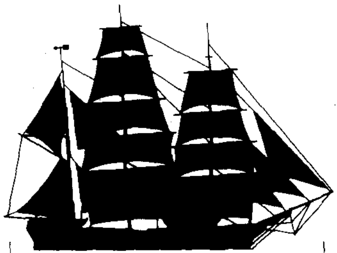

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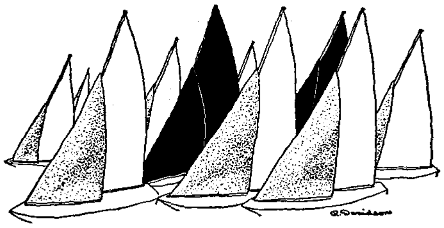
to suggest that employers don't hire by numbers in order to avoid lawsuits. But the courts have held that actual quotas per se are illegal, and that a white worker cannot be laid off to make room for a minority employee. On the question of quotas under Griggs, the Bush Administration deals mainly in assertion. The minority report issued by House Judiciary Committee Republicans on this year's civil-rights bill cites a *Fortune* poll that found that eighteen per cent of the chief executive officers of about two hundred large companies admitted that their companies had "specific quotas for hiring and promotion."

In the course of the nineteen-eighties, the Reagan Justice Department attacked all manner of presumably settled civil-rights law. It argued that the only job discrimination that should be actionable was proved past discrimination against individuals. It went at the concept of "disparate impact," arguing that reliance on numbers to prove discrimination inevitably led to the use of quotas. By 1989, the Supreme Court, now markedly different from the 1971 Court (and with Justice Byron White, a Kennedy appointee, changing his earlier view in the unanimous Griggs decision), was ready to pull back on Griggs. While it is commonly said that in 1989 the Court, in Wards Cove Packing Company Inc. v. Atonio, overturned Griggs, it actually preserved the concept of "disparate impact," but made it more difficult for plaintiffs to win a case. (White wrote the five-to-four decision.) Civil-rights advocates deliberately gave the "spin" to Wards Cove that it "overturned" Griggs, in order to heighten the emotional reaction to it.

The Wards Cove decision shifted the burden of proof, so that the plaintiffs had to show that the employment practices in question weren't required for the conduct of the business (rather than the employers having to show that they were necessary), and discarded the concept of "business necessity," requiring only that employers furnish a "business justification"—an easier standard to meet. The decision also required the plaintiffs to identify specifically the practice they regarded as discriminatory rather than, as in the past, challenge a group of practices. (This case had to do with the differing racial compositions of different parts of the work force of a canning factory.) The current debate—uproar, actually—over quotas was foreshadowed in the majority opinion, which, drawing upon an opinion by Sandra Day O'Connor the year before, said that for the plaintiffs to have prevailed would have meant that "any employer who had a segment of his work force that was—for some reason—racially imbalanced, could be haled into court and forced to engage in the expensive and time-consuming task of defending the 'business necessity' of the methods used to select the other members of his work force. The only practicable option for many employers will be to adopt racial quotas."

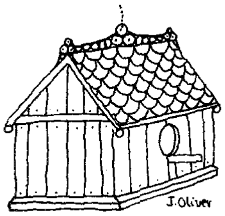
The Wards Cove decision was depicted by civil-rights advocates as representing a major shift in the civil-rights law as it had stood for eighteen years and making it far more difficult for minorities who felt they had been discriminated against to bring and win suits. (Some people sympathetic to the civil-rights movement say that Wards Cove has had a less drastic impact than had been predicted—but it did make a difference.) Wards Cove was one of six decisions that year—but the most significant one—that pared back minority rights in employment cases. Civil-rights groups concluded that the Supreme Court had to be deterred from cutting back on minority rights, and that Wards Cove and the other job-discrimination decisions had to be overturned. Oddly enough, civil-rights advocates took their stand on Wards Cove rather than some other big civil-rights decisions because they thought that it wouldn't get them into a political fight over the emotionally charged issue of quotas.

THE stated goal of the civil-rights advocates last year was to return to the law under Griggs. So they proposed to return the burden of proof to the employer, but in drawing up their proposal, having a menu of interpretations of Griggs and its progeny to choose from, they chose for tactical purposes a decision subsequent to Griggs which gave it the strictest interpretation of what employers had to prove.



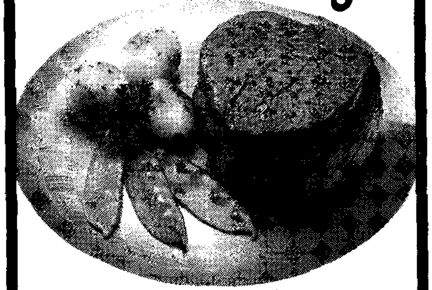
The bill, co-sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy and former Representative Augustus Hawkins, Democrat of California, was later modified to more nearly reflect the original Griggs decision. Though the Administration at first resisted introducing any bill at all, it finally submitted one of its own—also returning the burden of proof to the employer—and over many months there were negotiations between Democrats and Republicans that resulted in modification of the original Kennedy-Hawkins proposal, and between Kennedy and White House chief of staff John Sununu, with more changes being made in the congressional proposal. At various points, civil-rights advocates thought they had a deal between Kennedy and Sununu, only to see it fall through. Some business and conservative groups publicly took credit for preventing Sununu from "caving." Administration officials blamed Democrats for refusing to compromise further. By the accounts of some people within the Administration as well as opposed to it, the major instrument within the Administration keeping a deal from coming to pass was C. Boyden Gray, counsel to the President. Gray is an old friend of Bush's—he comes from the wealthy circles the President is most comfortable with (pork rinds notwithstanding)—who has been in on several Administration misadventures. He and his staff, which tends to come from right-wing political-legal circles, take a narrow view of civil-rights law. Last year, the Administration negotiators pressed for very loose standards that employers would have to meet in order to justify hiring practices, and at one point Gray went so far as to suggest language that would have allowed employers to take into account "legitimate community or customer relationship efforts." This was spiritually akin to the old argument that people shouldn't have to serve blacks in a restaurant if the other customers didn't like it. Even people within the Administration were horrified. In the end, the Administration declined to support a bipartisan deal that a number of Republicans had said they could go along with. The very conservative Orrin Hatch, Republican of Utah and a strong "anti-quota" man, had said at one point that he could go along with the final compromise proposal, but he backed away when the President wouldn't agree to it. The President vetoed the bill, and the Senate fell one vote short of the two-thirds necessary to override the veto. The override vote came in the midst of the President's ordeal over the budget, when he was having an awful time over the subject of taxes, and he was facing a crisis in the Persian Gulf; some Republicans didn't want to compound his troubles by voting against him on the civil-rights bill.

The arguments at the end were over the definition of "business necessity." On one level, this was a lawyers' argument that almost nobody could understand but which the lawyers insisted was very important, since their respective positions were based on case law. However, even a committed civil-rights lawyer says that at the end the two sides were "dancing on the head of a pin." The advocates of the bill felt they had compromised as far as they could without enraging some of their most important supporters; the Administration was dragging the anchor of those who wanted a looser interpretation of the law—or no law. On another level, the dispute wasn't about the law at all but about the political advantage that the Administration had already seen in branding the bill a "quota bill" and tarring those who supported it as supporting quotas. Numerous civil-rights advocates perceived a political advantage in having the President veto the bill—figuring that such an act would so hurt him with both black and mainstream white constituencies that it would be a net detriment to him and the Republican Party. They failed to see the potency of the "quota" issue.



The Administration made no such error. Well before the President vetoed the bill in late October of last year, one of his aides said to me, with a smile, "We'll veto, we'll sustain the veto, we'll end up with Wards Cove, and we'll have raised the quota issue—to our benefit." Another aide says that the veto was driven as much by ideology as it was by politics—that some of the President's advisers simply didn't want a bill. Then came the November elections and the victory of Jesse Helms, who had used a now famous ad about quotas, showing a white hand crumpling a job-rejection letter. Pete Wilson, a Republican, who was successful in his race for the governorship of California, had also used the quota issue. (Earlier, David Duke, a former member of the Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan, played upon racial tensions in Louisiana and came closer than most people had dared think to winning a Senate seat. Duke won sixty per cent of the white vote.) There is a strong argument that Helms, and perhaps Wilson, too, would have won anyway, but many politicians and political analysts tend to deal in simple equations, and concluded that both men won because of the quota issue. Subsequent polling data show that the quota issue is perhaps the most powerful one in our politics today—far more powerful than whether a politician erred by supporting the continuation of sanctions against Iraq. A House Democratic aide says, "The quota issue is radioactive." The result has been nothing less than panic in the Democratic ranks. A lot of members are asking why their leaders are putting them through the agony of having to vote on the civil-rights bill again this year.

But the Democratic congressional leadership was stuck. The civil-rights constituency has long been one of the pillars of the Democratic Party, and even when, as in this case, its concerns strike many Democrats as of marginal importance compared with earlier issues (voting rights, school desegregation, ending basic discrimination in jobs) or compared with the appalling conditions of so many urban blacks today, the Democrats couldn't in good conscience walk away. (Many were tempted.) Moreover, in the course of the final dealings on the budget last year the Congressional Black Caucus, consisting of twenty-three members (twenty-six this year), was upset at some of the budget provisions and enraged at Bush's successful veto of the civil-rights bill, and, in exchange for its final support of the budget, extracted a promise that the civil-rights bill would be brought up again early this year and would be given pride of place by being designated H.R. 1. (By custom, it is a big deal to have a bill designated H.R. 1, or S. 1.) Moreover, the Black Caucus members and other House liberals were miffed both that so many compromises had been made in last year's bill and that they hadn't had an opportunity to vote to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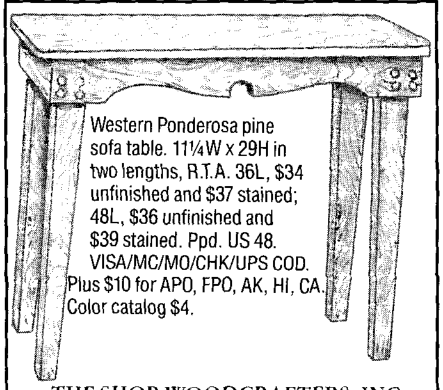
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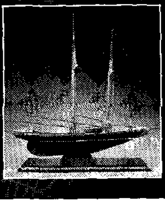

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override the President's veto. (If one chamber votes to sustain a veto, that's the end of it.) Having come so close, civil-rights groups were also determined to make another effort this year. The view of the increasingly apprehensive House Democratic leadership—now facing the full force of a backlash on the "quota" issue—was that if the thing had to be done it should be got over with as soon as possible.

Also, in order to broaden support for the bill and keep women's groups within the Democratic tent the designers of last year's bill had added compensatory and punitive damages for women found to have been victims of intentional discrimination. (Religious and other minorities and the disabled were added as well, thus giving more punch, and potential expense, to the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in July of last year.) Women's groups had been seeking redress for what they saw as the inequity caused by the fact that blacks could receive compensatory and punitive damages under the old Reconstruction law whereas under the 1964 Civil Rights law women and others could receive only back pay and attorneys' fees. Adding damages for women last year and this year created new political problems for the bill, since businesses were loath to be vulnerable to a whole new class of potential damages (and there are far more women than blacks). So, both last year and this year, the bill's sponsors compromised by putting a cap of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars on the amount of damages that women and some other plaintiffs, but not black plaintiffs, could receive, leaving many women—encouraged this year by certain women members of Congress—up in arms at what they saw as unequal treatment. The bill's sponsors made sympathetic noises, but said this was the only hope of getting enough votes to override a Presidential veto, and that without the cap women would continue to receive no damages at all. The bill's House backers say the cap picked up at least sixty votes this year. (As the Administration and other Republicans point out, there is a hole in the cap that could lead to damages higher than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.)

By early this year, Democratic senators were, if anything, more panicked than their House counterparts. Of the nineteen Democratic senators up for reëlection in 1992, eight are from the South and are considered vulnerable to the quota issue. (On the other hand, some of them were elected last time by a narrow margin, with black supporters making the difference.) The Senate leaders decided to let the House go first—perhaps in the hope that the whole thing would go away (which wasn't very likely) or at least that the House would produce a bill that, having been compromised, would be a more palatable place to begin. Actually, the Senate often prefers that the House take up the more controversial legislation first; that way, senators can come out in favor of all sorts of difficult issues that they know the House might kill and relieve the senators' nervous colleagues of having to vote on. A key senator says, "We don't want to go first on controversial issues." So the senators waited to see what emerged from the House with how much steam behind it—and, meanwhile, they became increasingly uneasy about what was already a sensitive problem for them.

Edward Kennedy has long since become the right wing's favorite bugbear. Just saying the name (usually in the form of "Teddy" Kennedy, presumably to diminish the man further, and often with a sneer) in association with any sort of proposal was to identify it as ultra-liberal—and tinged with immorality. Kennedy is without question a great senator—even Hatch, who has become his good friend, says so—and one of the Senate's all-time coalition-builders and workhorses. Because of his close ties with the liberal and labor constituencies of the Democratic Party, and because of his position as chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, he is often the prime moving force behind the Party's liberal legislation. Even before the events at Palm Beach over the Easter weekend, other Senate Democrats, particularly but not entirely from the South, were becoming nervous about Kennedy's prominent role in pushing legislation that enabled Republicans to tag the Party again and again as the tool of its special interests, as anti-business, and (though it was never put quite this way) as being too pro-black. (Tagging Democrats one way or another as favoring blacks goes back to the Nixon era, and certainly reared its head in the 1988 Presidential campaign, but the "quota" issue has provided the strongest ammunition yet.) So apprehensive had some of these people become that earlier this year a Democratic senator with good ties to both Kennedy and the Southerners was sent as an emissary to Kennedy to ask that he and his most liberal cohorts not put vulnerable Democrats through too many uncomfortable votes. After Palm Beach, some senators said privately that they did wish that Kennedy wouldn't be the sponsor of this year's civil-rights bill—but they didn't see how his name could be taken off it. A senior Democratic senator said to me, with some regret, "That would be too obvious." According to this senator, it isn't entirely a coincidence that the Democrats' new health-insurance plan has as its chief sponsor Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell—even though Kennedy has labored hard on the issue for years. "I can see it now," a Southern Democrat said to me not long ago. "We'll be tagged with supporting 'the Kennedy-quota bill.' "

Earlier this year, Kennedy understood that it would be more helpful to his colleagues, and more conducive to getting a bill, if he waited until the House had worked its will on the civil-rights bill; then he could introduce the House-passed measure, perhaps with a Republican co-sponsor, thus solving two problems: the pressure would be off him to introduce the more far-reaching bill that he did last year and that many of his civil-rights supporters might still prefer (but which by then clearly wouldn't have a chance), and something would be introduced that wouldn't be labelled *the* Kennedy bill. The Democratic leaders in both chambers want to get a two-thirds vote for the bill and try to entice the President to sign it—and get the issue behind them. If a veto is overridden, the bill becomes law anyway, without the President's signature. This week, Senator John Danforth, Republican of Missouri and a moderate, saying that he was concerned about his Party's appearing to turn against civil rights, and about the divisiveness of the debate, introduced some compromise proposals; Danforth had eight Republican co-sponsors, including one—Warren Rudman, of New Hampshire—who had voted against overriding the President last year. (Danforth had voted to override.) If Danforth and Kennedy—with the Southern Democrats having a voice, and the civil-rights forces staying aboard—can reach a compromise, and the White House is unable to peel any of Danforth's group away, the President would be cornered.

THE Republicans do seem better at the art of repetition than the Democrats—and they had a simpler message—and by the end of last year they had successfully planted the idea that the Democrats favored quotas. This year, they drove that message home. To try to buy protection this year, the Democrats did two things: they emphasized the bill's provisions giving women more relief—going so far as to call this year's bill the Civil Rights and Women's Equity in Employment Act—and they tried to engage in negotiations with the Business Roundtable, a consortium of about two hundred chief executive officers of mostly Fortune 500 companies. The idea was that if the Business Roundtable signed on, this would provide useful protection. At the same time, however, the bill's primary Democratic sponsors in the House proceeded to draw up a bill that pulled back from some of last year's compromises, with the apparent thought that this would give them negotiating room. It is also the case that the two committees that produced this year's House bill—the Judiciary Committee and the Education and Labor Committee—are more liberal than the House Democrats as a whole. Liberals head for these committees so that they can do their business there, and not uncommonly produce bills unacceptable to their fellow-Democrats. Representative Jim Cooper, a thirty-six-year-old moderate Democrat from Tennessee and a smart and thoughtful man, says, "Most of the committees these days are captive of their special interests and pass on the problems to be resolved on the floor. You can't find a Southerner who will volunteer to go on the Judiciary Committee."

There is in fact among Democrats more than a little impatience with the civil-rights movement's and its friends' tactics on the civil-rights bill. A quite senior and not illiberal Democrat told me with some exasperation recently that he didn't understand why the civil-rights forces didn't come up with a bill simply restoring the Griggs decision. Instead, by looking for advantage here and there they opened up their proposal to attack (some of it

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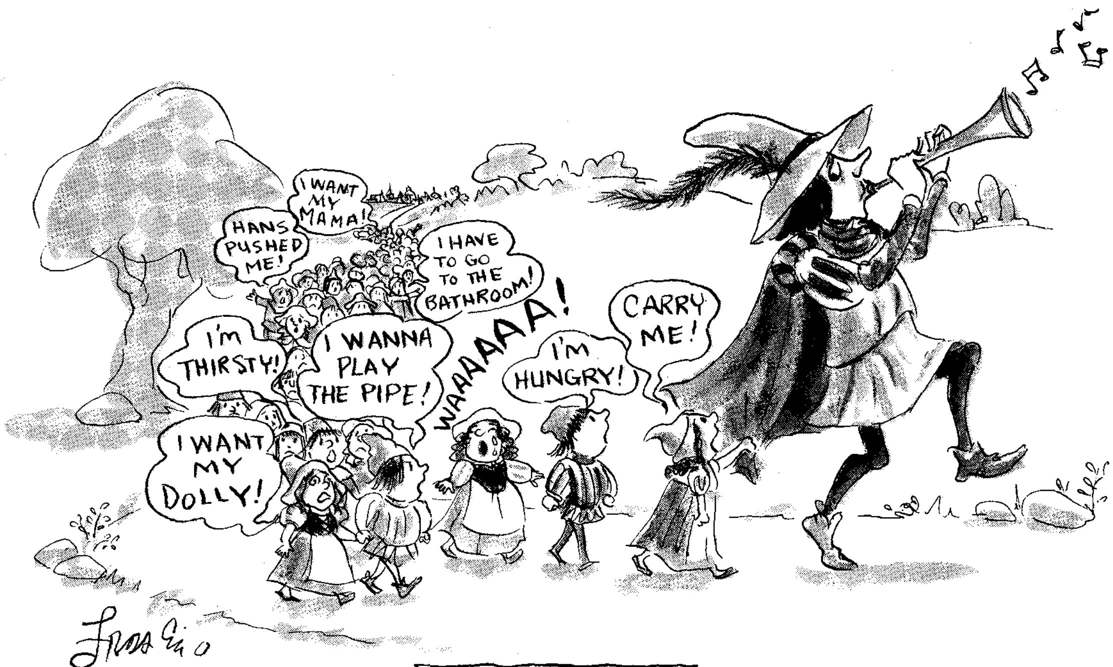
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demagogic) and forced their friends into a wilderness of negotiations over issues that don't seem of towering importance and that hardly anyone understands. A Democratic congressional aide says, "The bill was conceived by civil-rights lawyers who are deeply involved in the issue and know too much and want to remedy several setbacks in civil rights, and didn't understand the political implications."

So, in the lengthy negotiations among the House Democrats to come up with a substitute proposal that would win more votes on the floor, tortuous discussions went on over the use of the words "substantial" and "significant" and "manifest"—all of which mean a great deal to civil-rights lawyers and virtually nothing to anyone else. A congressional aide (a liberal) says, "We're cramming a whole series of hypothetical situations into a word, and the wildest outcome is what each side will use to make its argument." He adds, "We're dealing with an issue, not a problem. We're not dealing with the fact that more blacks are in the criminal-justice system than in college. We're not dealing with the fact that forty per cent of black adult males are functionally illiterate, or that twenty-five per cent of black males between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine are in prison, on parole, or probation."

A big change made in the House leadership's bill last week was that in order to be justifiable an employment practice had to have a "substantial and manifest" relationship to the job performance, rather than a "significant and manifest" relationship. This change was made to mollify some Southerners who had been convinced by Gray and Sununu that there was a big problem with the previous language. The change didn't make the Administration feel any more kindly toward the bill. Another flaming issue was over whether these terms pertain to "effective job performance" (the Democratic proposal) or "the employment in question" (this year's Administration bill). It is known to be Gray's position that under this definition a high-school diploma could be defended as an employment requirement, and that that's an appropriate requirement. (He points to the military as an example.) Another change in the leadership bill abolished the practice of "race-norming," by which test scores of job applicants were adjusted to take into account different racial backgrounds. The practice, embodied in a Labor Department regulation, was first encouraged by the Carter Administration and left in place throughout the Reagan Administration and was only made an issue of by Republicans earlier this year, and was included in their bill. The practice is actually favored by a number of businesses as a helpful indicator of who will succeed on the job—but it is virtually impossible to explain politically. (In fact, a year ago the Bush Administration proposed dropping the practice, but the business community wanted it continued.) So the Democrats, loath to have another political loser on their hands, abolished race-norming—but, to placate those who saw the practice as overcoming an inequity that made the tests unfair, added language saying that any tests had to be "valid" and "fair." In effect, they went around in a circle and left it to others to figure out a solution—and may have set up a whole new round of court cases. The Bush Administration is expected to drop race-norming soon.

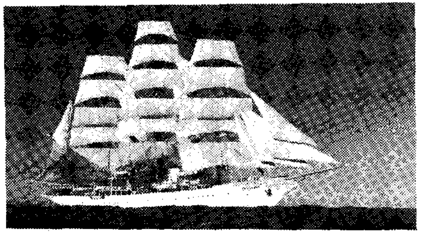
Actually, there isn't as much difference between the bill the Administration introduced this year and the one sponsored by the civil-rights forces as either side would have us believe—though the Administration, like the civil-rights forces, backed away from last year's compromise. In fact, an argument can be made that if the Democrats' bill is a "quota bill," so is the Administration's: both shift to the employer the burden of proof that an employment practice which ended in disparate impact was necessary. The civil-rights forces argue that the Administration's standards are so loose as to make it extremely difficult for plaintiffs to win such a case; the Administration argues that the Democrats' standards are so tight as to cause an employer to adopt quotas to avoid a lawsuit. (Also, the Administration offers fewer remedies and smaller damages for women.) Both sides say that they are relying on the language in Griggs—using that decision, like Scripture, to find what meaning they want. The Administration officials' use of the word "quotas" was a sly one: they weren't arguing that the bill in itself established quotas but that its provisions were so potentially burdensome that it would lead employers to establish quotas in order to avoid a lawsuit. When Administration officials are asked what parts, exactly, of the Democrats' bill would lead to quotas, they come up with surprisingly thin, movable, and, to some extent, misleading replies. Nevertheless, senior Democrats thought that the civil-rights forces should have already moved closer to the Administration's bill—legal niceties notwithstanding. And Senate leaders were already planning to try to amend the bill further in the direction of the Administration in order to have enough votes to override a veto. Of course, if the Administration wished to reach a compromise it could do so.

As is the case in so many other issues in our politics today—flag burning, the death penalty, the Brady bill, and even the vote on the war—the argument is much more over symbols than substance. Because of the way campaigns are run, and because our politics is increasingly polarized, the debates and the votes are fraught—one must keep in mind what sort of thirty-second spot might be run—even though the substantive differences aren't what they appear to be. The death penalty has at best a marginal relationship to the crime issue, but it's easier to talk about (and demagogue) than the larger and more elusive crime issues. A congressional aide says, "People take the whole direction of government and embody it in these simple slogans." Both parties play the game: in the cool of the night, Democrats know that the Medicare program should be cut, but they leap at the opportunity to attack Republicans who suggest such a thing. The congressional aide says, "It's what people up here on Capitol Hill are struggling with all the time: How do we make ourselves matter more? How do we connect with the public on issues that matter? Responsible people are unhappy about the state of the debate, but feel almost powerless to do anything about it."

THE goal of the House leadership was to secure House passage of a civil-rights bill with at least as many votes as last year's compromise received (two hundred and seventy-three), despite the flagging popularity of the issue, and, even better, to get enough votes (two hundred and eighty-eight) to show that the House could override a Presidential veto. (If the vote fell far short of last year's total, the Senate might not bother taking up the bill.) The hope was to shame the President into signing the bill—or, by compromising a great deal, to expose him as a hypocrite if he refused to do so. Achievement of this goal hadn't been helped by the fact that the Administration had managed to torpedo the Business Roundtable talks, which had apparently been making some progress, or by the fact that each time the bill's sponsors made a concession to pick up the votes of waverers the Administration, like Lucy, moved the ball. No matter what changes were made, the Administration designated the Democrats' bill a "quota bill." Even when the bill's sponsors added language specifically making quotas illegal (thus putting into statutory form what the Supreme Court had already ruled) but, to mollify the Black Caucus and other liberal backers, approved affirmative-action programs, the Administration denounced it as a disguise for quotas. The Democrats had thought that adding this language was devilishly clever—and would enable them to run ads saying that whoever opposed their bill was for quotas—but it didn't seem to overcome the Administration's political advantage on the quota issue. Several prominent Democrats concluded that the Administration had "won the spin" on quotas.

More than one person close to the Administration (not to mention numerous Democrats, civil-rights advocates, and even dispassionate observers) thinks that the real point is that the Administration doesn't want a bill. Spokespeople for the President look at one very soulfully and say, "The President really wants to sign a civil-rights bill"—but the people around him are once again doing all they can to ward off a compromise. If there were no bill this year, the Administration would be "ahead" on two counts: the Wards Cove decision would stand (for all its professions otherwise, the Administration really doesn't seem to like the Griggs decision), and the Administration would have the "quota" issue to beat the Democrats over the head with next year. If there is no compromise, a vulnerable Democratic senator would perhaps have to vote twice—once on the question of passing the bill and once on the question of overriding a veto—on a measure the Administration would have labelled a "quota" bill.

House Democratic leaders went to



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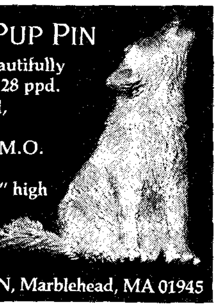

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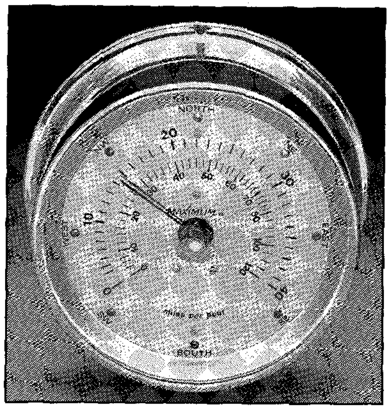

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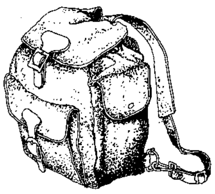

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great lengths to gain a two-thirds vote for the bill—and for a time thought they would succeed. In the search for votes from Southerners as well as from Northerners from urban, ethnic districts, they made change after change—each one designed to make the bill more politically palatable or to offset arguments that the Administration was making. Each time, the Administration dismissed the changes as "cosmetics" or as still representing a "quota" bill—sometimes even before it had seen the new language. All this reinforced many people's impression that the debate wasn't on the level. At the same time, the bill's managers could go only so far, lest the most adamant civil-rights supporters abandon them and, combined with women upset at the cap on damages, cut substantially into their vote total. To complicate things further, even the civil-rights groups themselves weren't united, and it was all that Ralph Neas, the forty-five-year-old executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of civil-rights organizations, could do to keep them from rebelling at compromises. Neas himself has taken a fairly pragmatic view, knowing that it would be best to get the issue over with, and saving some compromises for later in this year's deliberations. Some Southerners were won over by the changes, but others withstood the leadership's importuning—or yielded to the Administration's importuning. Some Southerners wavered to the end, uncertain about the racial makeup of their districts following redistricting.

Meanwhile, perhaps because the discussions about "significant" and "manifest" meant nothing to the country at large, or perhaps because the whole issue addressed by the bill was of marginal importance compared to other problems blacks face, there was a striking lack of grass-roots activity behind the bill. But there was plenty of grass-roots activity against it. And by playing on the "quota" issue the Republicans were working to solidify their support among white Southern males, among whom Democrats have been dramatically losing support, and among urban ethnics. Not only the White House but certain Republican congressional leaders saw this as a dandy way to increase their congressional margins. If ever there was a "wedge" issue—an issue that divides the old Democratic constituencies—it's the "quota" issue. Northern, urban members of Congress with large ethnic constituencies complained to the Democratic leadership about its presenting Democrats with this bill—and some of them, in particular from the Chicago area, told the leadership they couldn't support the bill. An aide to a Northern, urban Democrat says that he and his counterparts describe it as "the bill from Hell." A Southern Democrat describes his constituency as "fifty per cent black and a hundred per cent mad": the compromises weren't satisfying anyone. To a large degree, the lawyers haggling over the details were on one planet and the politics of the issue were on another.

Probably the most potent lobby against the civil-rights bill consists of small businesses. One weapon that the Administration was able to use against the Business Roundtable talks—aside from bringing direct pressure on some of its members—was to point out that such anti-discrimination legislation is less difficult for big business to handle than it is for small business. Much of big business has adjusted to the new rules, and can afford to defend itself in lawsuits. Small businesses, broadly speaking, have been more reluctant to adjust, and aren't much comforted by the fine points of the law. They don't care whether the operative word is "manifest" or "significant" or just what has to be shown about the relevance of a hiring practice to the job in question. *They don't want to be sued.* They don't want to have to hire lawyers and defend themselves in court.

The civil-rights bill was just one of several that have led small-business people to conclude that the national Democratic Party was out to impose unreasonable restrictions on their way of doing business—the disabilities act and a pending bill requiring parental leave are among the others. Jim Cooper, the Tennessee congressman, says, "You can be sued on anything today. People back home think all sorts of things are being done to them with this bill. It doesn't take a very big difference in legislative language to make people go crazy. Lobbyists will take the worst interpretation of the bill and spread fear. Most laws are intuitive: people sense 'That's right' or 'That's wrong'; but today there are so many more laws and they're so complicated that paranoia sets in. A lot of white-collar people no longer have the sense that they know in their bones what's legal and what's not. And they end up having this fear that the government is out to get them." To these people, the Democrats' adding the language outlawing quotas—and allowing someone who felt he had been discriminated against by a quota to sue for damages—left them feeling damned if they did and damned if they didn't.

The National Federation of Independent Business, the largest organization representing small businesses, has taken an active role in opposing an effective civil-rights bill and the addition of punitive damages for women. The N.F.I.B. is a powerful lobby, since it represents the leading businessmen in many congressmen's districts—people who are both influential and financial contributors. A key House figure says, "Southern Democrats are caught between their constituents and their money: they may have a thirty-five-per-cent black constituency, but their financial support comes from small business." The N.F.I.B. claims, correctly, that it represents businesses with collectively a lot more workers than the Business Roundtable. Last year, the N.F.I.B., the United States Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers formed the Fair Employment Coalition, which operates out of the offices of the N.A.M., and which opposed last year's bill and has been lobbying—in conjunction with the White House—against this year's bill. (The coalition helped undermine the talks between the civil-rights groups and the Business Roundtable.) It conducted an ad campaign in the districts of members considered undecided on the bill: the ad asserted that Congress ("They're at it again") was "trying to pass a bill that would force employers to hire and promote by quotas" or face expensive lawsuits. The National Congressional Club, the political-action committee formed by Helms's backers, ran an ad that in part reprised Helms's ad about the rejection letter and began with a photo of Edward Kennedy and said, "Ted Kennedy is at it again. He's pushing another minority-quota bill in Congress."

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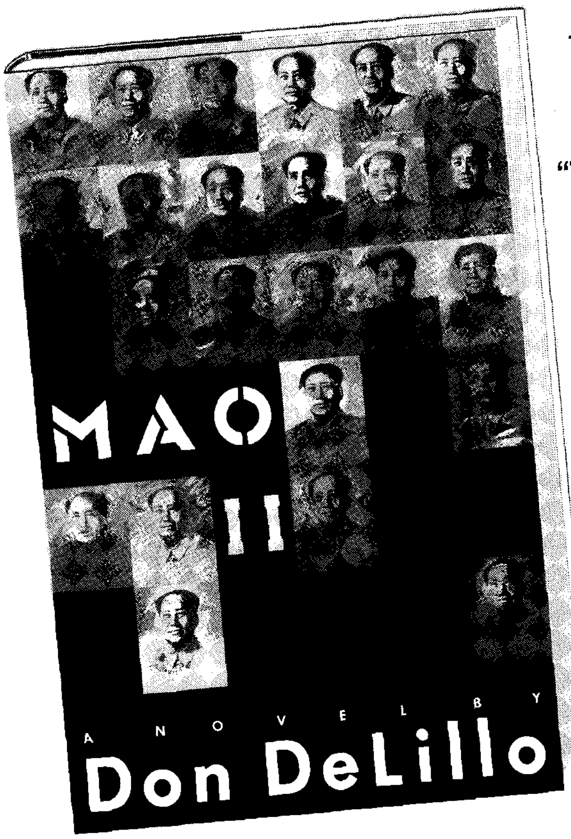

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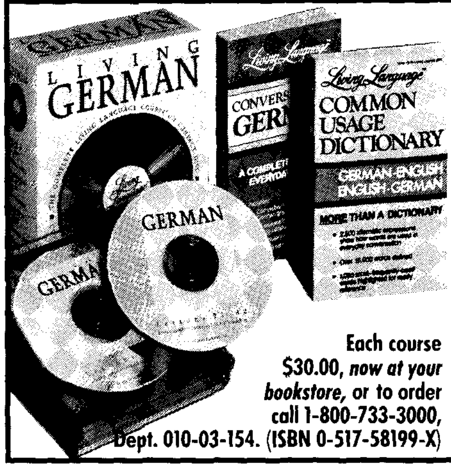

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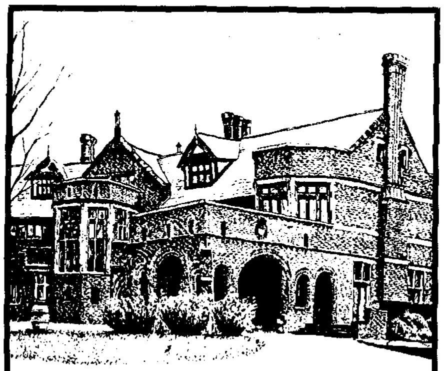

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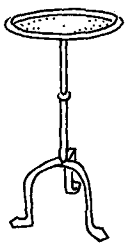

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a deeper level and would be there with or without the lobbying: a large number of people don't want to be told whom they have to hire, and many undoubtedly don't want to hire blacks. That racial prejudice lies behind some of the high-minded arguments against this legislation is unquestionable—just as it lay behind some of the objections to earlier advances for blacks. The old "states' rights" movement, which objected to voting-rights legislation and school desegregation, wasn't simply proceeding on an intellectual plane. There are people who genuinely see a limited role for the state, and there are bigots; sometimes they're the same people, sometimes not. White workers who fear loss of job opportunities to blacks simply on the basis of race are acting on genuine emotions. There may be limits on how far a society can be pressed to make way for a minority—especially if that society's political leadership not only isn't interested in helping it through the changes but chooses to exacerbate the tensions that they cause.

THIS week, as expected, the House easily rejected both a more liberal version of the leadership's proposal (backed by the Black Caucus and by some Democratic women seeking to eliminate the cap) and the Administration's alternative, and adopted the leadership proposal. Then it passed the bill by a vote of 273–158. So, by the skin of their teeth, the Democrats managed to get just the same number of votes that last year's compromise did—despite the fact that Democrats picked up seats in last November's elections—and fell short by fifteen votes of the number needed to override a Presidential veto. Despite their attempt to put the best face on the outcome, the Democratic leaders were disappointed. They had certainly hoped to exceed last year's number, and give the bill "momentum," and protection, going into the Senate. The Administration persuaded nine Republicans who had supported last year's compromise to vote against this year's bill. Before the voting, Republicans staunchly defended the President, and tried to establish that though they opposed quotas they were for civil rights. Earlier in the week, when the leadership saw that it wouldn't have enough votes for an override, it shifted its goal and said that it was sure it would have enough when it came time to vote on a compromise that would be reached with the Senate.

THERE are grounds for criticizing the behavior of both sides in this argument—to varying degrees—but at the center of the story is the mystery of George Bush. His roundhouse, and knee-jerk, attacks on the bill in the days leading up to the House voting only serve to illustrate the mystery. One couldn't help but wonder whether he ever sat down and studied the bill and quizzed his aides closely about the advice they were giving him. One wonders whether he cared at all about the substantive issues. Surely if he had instructed his aides to work out a compromise—if he had put himself on line for a compromise—he could have got one. This isn't to say that some of the civil-rights supporters might not have tried to play games, but, in contrast to last year's brawl over taxes, there was precious little impetus among Democrats to keep the civil-rights battle going this year. In fact, they desperately want to get it off the agenda.

A long time ago, Bush was part of that tradition of the Republican Party which worked for bipartisan civil-rights progress. But in this instance it seems that we are back to the George Bush who—at least on domestic issues—long since lost his moorings. He acted on principle in the Persian Gulf—even if not everyone agreed with his principle—and we had almost forgotten the other Bush. This is the Bush who didn't know where he stood on taxes and believes himself to be a decent man and contributes to the United Negro College Fund—but is not above exploiting racial tensions for his own political advancement. He still has time to reverse course, and work for a compromise, and do some healing. His defensiveness in recent days suggests that some of the criticism of his behavior has got to him. Up to now, in playing the role that he has on the anti-job-discrimination bill he has been exploiting the rawest racial issue in this country today, and his performance has been nothing less than shameful. For this, history will judge him ill.

—ELIZABETH DREW

•

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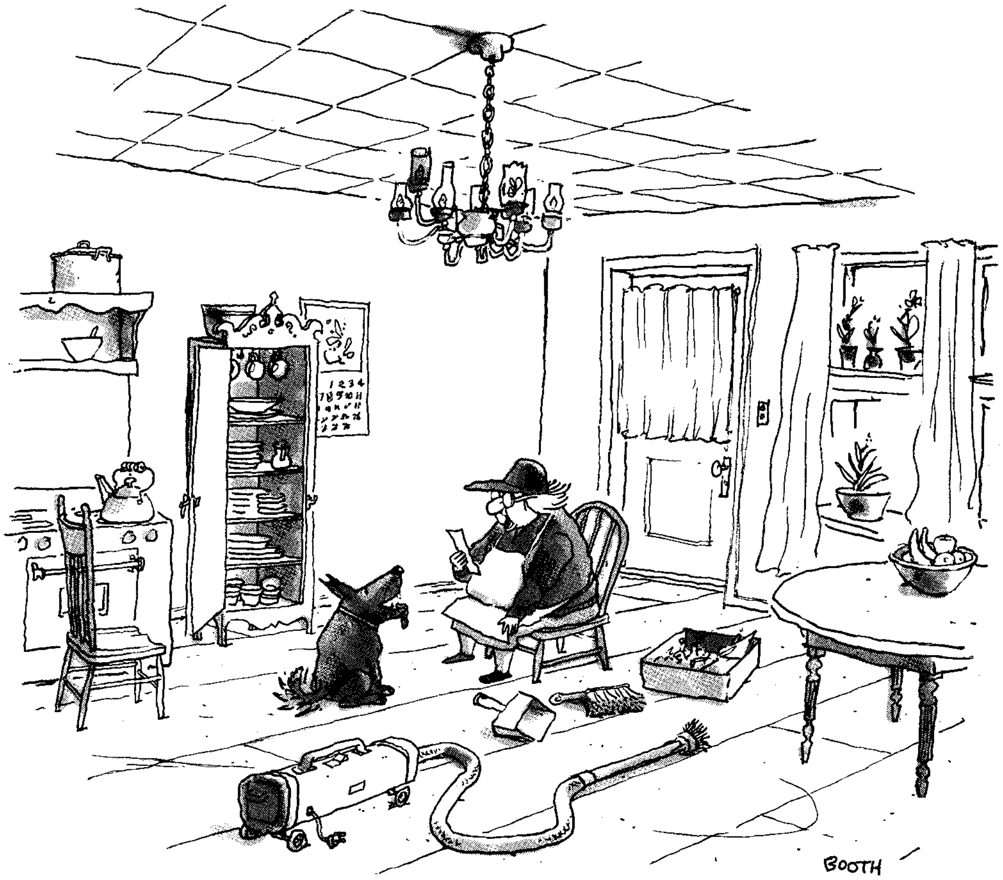
BOOKS

All the President's Men II

“A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs” (Hill & Wang; $27.95), by Theodore Draper, tells what happened when an American President tried to hijack American foreign policy. It recounts a series of bizarre events, but Draper has meticulously organized them into a readable historical narrative, written with a concentration that brings the entire implausible story to life. His book is based on an “avalanche of material” with which the public is unfamiliar. These sources are not secret; they include some fifty thousand pages of depositions, documents, and testimony—from executive investigations, congressional hearings, and trials—which journalists had time only to skim. To Draper, a well-known historian who specializes in contemporary affairs, their very bulk and detail offered an irresistible challenge (or temptation). A dedicated researcher, he has worked through it all, comparing and cross-checking. He can tell us just what happened, and when and why. Where documents or recollections conflict and uncertainty remains, Draper says so, but mostly the facts speak for themselves—sometimes literally, as in the transcribed texts of recorded conversations between Americans and Iranians, which convey the style as well as the substance of the pitifully unrealistic interchanges that characterized our secret diplomacy. For the time being, anyhow, this is the definitive account.

Draper starts us off with a White House tour, a guide through the national-security labyrinth. We learn that the National Security Council staff, on which Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, U.S.M.C., served as deputy director of political-military affairs, isn't in fact the staff of the National Security Council. The council, established by the National Security Act of 1947, is “the highest Executive Branch entity” overseeing our intelligence and national-security programs; its members are the President, the Vice-President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the director of the C.I.A., and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1953, President Eisenhower created the post of Special Assistant for National Security, and moved the council staff into the Executive Office of the President. Without changing its name, the staff became the President's, not the council's, and during the Iran-Contra affairs members of the council often had no idea what the staff was up to. Over the years, the staff grew. Under President Reagan's national-security advisers—during this period they were Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. McFarlane, U.S.M.C., retired (1983-1985), and Vice Admiral John M. Poindexter (1986)—it numbered about two hundred and forty-five.

In the nineteen-seventies, Draper recalls, Congress began seeking greater accountability from the executive with regard to national-security affairs. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, passed in 1974, requires a “finding” from the President stating that a covert action is important to our national security, followed by a “timely” report to Congress. The 1980 Intelligence Oversight Act requires the President to report to Congress before undertaking “significant” covert activity. The executive branch didn't take those laws as seriously as Congress hoped it would, and in a series of increasingly restrictive amendments to the Defense Appropriations Acts of 1983, 1984, and 1985, sponsored by Representative Edward Boland, Congress attempted to get the executive's attention. The first Boland amendment specifically forbade the C.I.A. and the Department of Defense to spend appropriated money to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Congress had been



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informed that the C.I.A. was trying to stop the Sandinista government from sending arms to El Salvador's guerrillas, and members of Congress were infuriated when they learned—from the media—that the C.I.A. was also supporting a counter-revolution in Nicaragua. And then, without warning Congress, the C.I.A. mined three Nicaraguan harbors in January and February, 1984. So the last of these Boland amendments prohibited the C.I.A., the Department of Defense, "or any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities" from using appropriated money to support, "directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua."

After the second Boland amendment, the President told McFarlane to keep the Contras alive, "body and soul." McFarlane started to raise money from foreign governments. (Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Brunei all contributed.) North encouraged front groups to raise money from private citizens in the United States and, through William J. Casey, the director of the C.I.A., located a couple of arms dealers—Major General Richard V. Secord, U.S.A.F., retired, and his partner, Albert Hakim—to spend it.

The political, ideological, legal, and constitutional furor the Iran-Contra affairs evoked has, I suspect, obscured their very high proportion of scam. Draper estimates that the Contras received only about twenty per cent of the millions raised for them inside this country; he mentions one benefit dinner that grossed two hundred thousand dollars but netted only three thousand for the Nicaraguan Refugee Fund. Draper also shows that the claim that Contra aid was entirely funded from outside the government is fraudulent: the N.S.C. staff was paid from the federal budget, and North repeatedly called on employees of the C.I.A. and the State Department to get him out of jams; they complied, often without question, because he was speaking for the White House. Then, too, congressionally funded assistance programs were used to bribe Nicaragua's neighbors into overlooking the war that spilled onto their territory.

As far as I can tell from reading Draper, the Iranian fiasco was nothing but a con game all along. Backed by the rich Saudi wheeler-dealer Adnan Khashoggi, an Iranian of uncertain biography named Manucher Ghorbanifar stung the Iranian, Israeli, and United States governments. Ghorbanifar wanted to make money selling arms, which Iran needed to make up for its losses in the war with Iraq. Israel had American weapons and wanted to please the United States. The Israelis also wanted better relations with Iran, or, failing that, to prolong the Iran-Iraq War. The United States, however, was leading an international campaign of persuasion and pressure, Operation Staunch, to embargo arms sales to Iran.

At the same time, our government badly wanted to free the American hostages in Lebanon, and believed that Iran was the Lebanese Shiite terrorists' patron. Ghorbanifar, who couldn't tell the truth about anything—he failed every polygraph test the Americans administered—had a creative imagination, and grasped the possibilities in this multilateral ambivalence. He invented a "moderate" faction in Iran, men who hoped to attain power after the aged Ayatollah Khomeini died. The moderates' alleged eagerness for conciliation was so bewitching that the Israelis and the Americans agreed to let the Israelis supply Iran with American weapons, which the Americans would then replace. In return, the hostages would be released, and everybody would be friends. Since arming Iran, like arming the Contras, violated this country's announced foreign policy, this second plot, like the first, had to be carried out by middlemen who were not working for any government. Ghorbanifar was in business: he charged the Iranians three hundred thousand dollars apiece for missiles the Israelis sold him for a hundred and forty thousand dollars. North, meanwhile, had been detailed to handle the Iranian deal, with no thought that it would have any connection with Nicaragua. It was just another job. He later claimed that in January, 1986, Ghorbanifar suggested he divert some of the Iranian-arms-sale profits to the Contras, but the diversion appears to have begun earlier. In November of 1985, the Israelis deposited a million dollars in Secord and Hakim's Swiss bank account to pay for transporting missiles; the transportation cost a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and North told the Israelis that he had donated the remaining eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the Contras.

Draper is fair to his cast. He shows

that North and his superiors had been trained not for covert operations but for conventional military action, and suggests that this may explain some of their mistakes. For example, covert actions, to succeed, shouldn't last as long or involve as many people as these did, and it is not good professional practice to mingle missions and missions' personnel. And Draper keeps a perfectly straight face as he records slapstick ineptitude: no matter how many other laws the N.S.C. men broke, they faithfully obeyed Murphy's. If they built an illicit airstrip in Costa Rica, it seems inevitable that it would turn to mud and bog down a Contra-supply plane, and it also seems inevitable that they would outrage the Iranians by sending them missiles they didn't need and hadn't ordered, because the civilian go-betweens who arranged the transfer couldn't tell one kind of missile from another.

President Reagan managed the Iran-Contra projects like a genial tyrant. Draper remarks that Reagan "made policy without Congress or the National Security Council." He never argued his case at council meetings, or clearly stated his intentions. When the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, objected that the contemplated transfer of arms to Iran violated the Arms Export Control Act, the President brought in his Attorney General, Edwin Meese, who thought the sale permissible under the Economy and National Security acts. Advice never changed Reagan's mind. Neither did events. Our rule of not ransoming hostages was based on the self-evident proposition that paying ransom encourages hostage-taking, and that's exactly what happened. The N.S.C. staff's covert dealings succeeded in getting three hostages freed, but the Shiite gangs in Lebanon took three more. Even then, the President didn't order his staff to stop talking to the Iranians.

Reagan's method of making policy diverges from President Eisenhower's, as John Prados describes it in his book "Keepers of the Keys: A History of the National Security Council from Truman to Bush" (Morrow; $24.95). "Eisenhower," Prados writes, "was aggressive, debating at council meetings . . . questioning facts and motives, arguing points, issuing blanket warnings, and stating intentions." Prados's conscientious study doesn't offer the detail on the Iran-Contra affairs that Draper's

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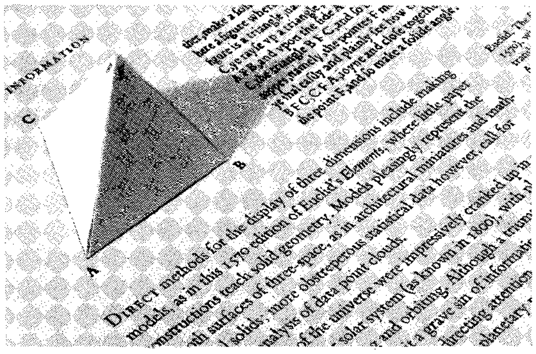

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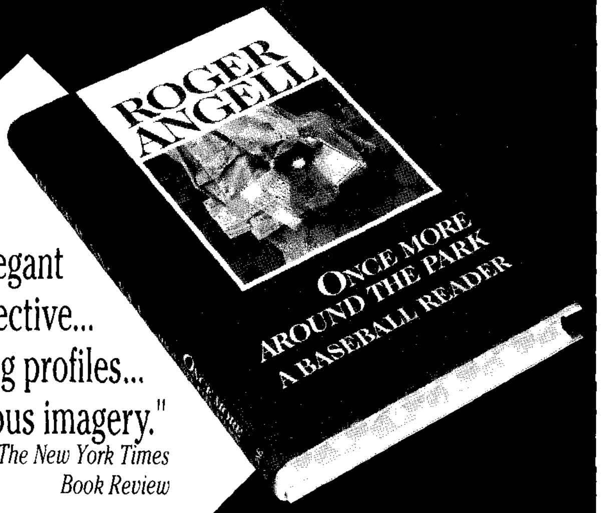

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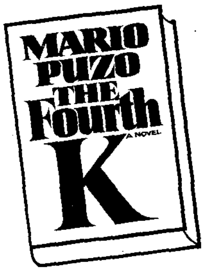

book does, but their views of the episode don't differ materially. Prados is writing institutional history, and is particularly interested in comparing the ways that different Presidents used this private bureaucracy. He thinks it was McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's national-security adviser, who decisively "transformed the N.S.C. staff from servants of the *presidency* to those of the *President.*"

In any case, that is precisely how, according to Draper, McFarlane, Poindexter, and North regarded themselves. When the story broke, and the Iran-Contra secrets became the Iran-Contra scandals, the Administration protected the President by denying that he knew about the schemes he had ordered. But Draper also notes, with distress, that some of Reagan's supporters, as well as the N.S.C. staff, argued that, although the revelations might be politically embarrassing, the President and the N.S.C. staff couldn't have done anything illegal, because Presidents are under no constitutional restraint in foreign affairs, and are legally free to make and carry out any foreign policy they choose. Draper is almost too courteous in expounding this crackpot view of Presidential powers—almost too polite in pointing out the misquotations and misinterpretations by intellectual lightweights which would make a President a dictator, free to turn foreign policy upside down or inside out, like the leaders who concluded the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. The experts on constitutional law whom Draper cites don't agree that the Constitution bestows on the President a latitude in foreign policy that it denies him in domestic affairs; they emphasize that the Constitution is designed to insure that nobody in the American government can exercise arbitrary power for any purpose. Draper stresses that the quarrel about Presidential powers isn't partisan, and in a brief historical survey he notes that Presidents of both parties have tried to stretch their powers:

> The Iran-contra affairs were not an aberration; they were brought on by a long process of presidential aggrandizement, congressional fecklessness, and judicial connivance. If anything is to be gained from this costly experience, it should be the belated realization that this process has put the Constitution in danger.

Draper's last, thoughtful chapters are concerned, rather than polemical, in tone. He insists that the Iran-Contra affairs were more than a farcical coda to the Cold War, and have left behind "unfinished business," because the struggle to place the Presidency above the law continues. He reminds us that in 1989 Congress passed a bill that would have forbidden Presidents to solicit or divert funds to carry out policies that the law prohibits, and that President Bush vetoed it. One of Bush's congressional supporters, Senator Jesse Helms, argued that the President was entitled to make any foreign policy that appealed to him if he could do so without spending appropriated money. Did Helms realize that his argument makes hash of nearly a thousand years of English and American constitutional development, which lodged the power of the purse in the lower house in order to control the executive? I wonder how many of Draper's readers will observe, with amazement, that two hundred years after our Constitution was adopted the Senator, by his advocacy, and the President, by his veto, were trying to create a Chief Executive on the model of a colonial governor who is free of control by the assembly because his salary is paid by George III.

—NAOMI BLIVEN

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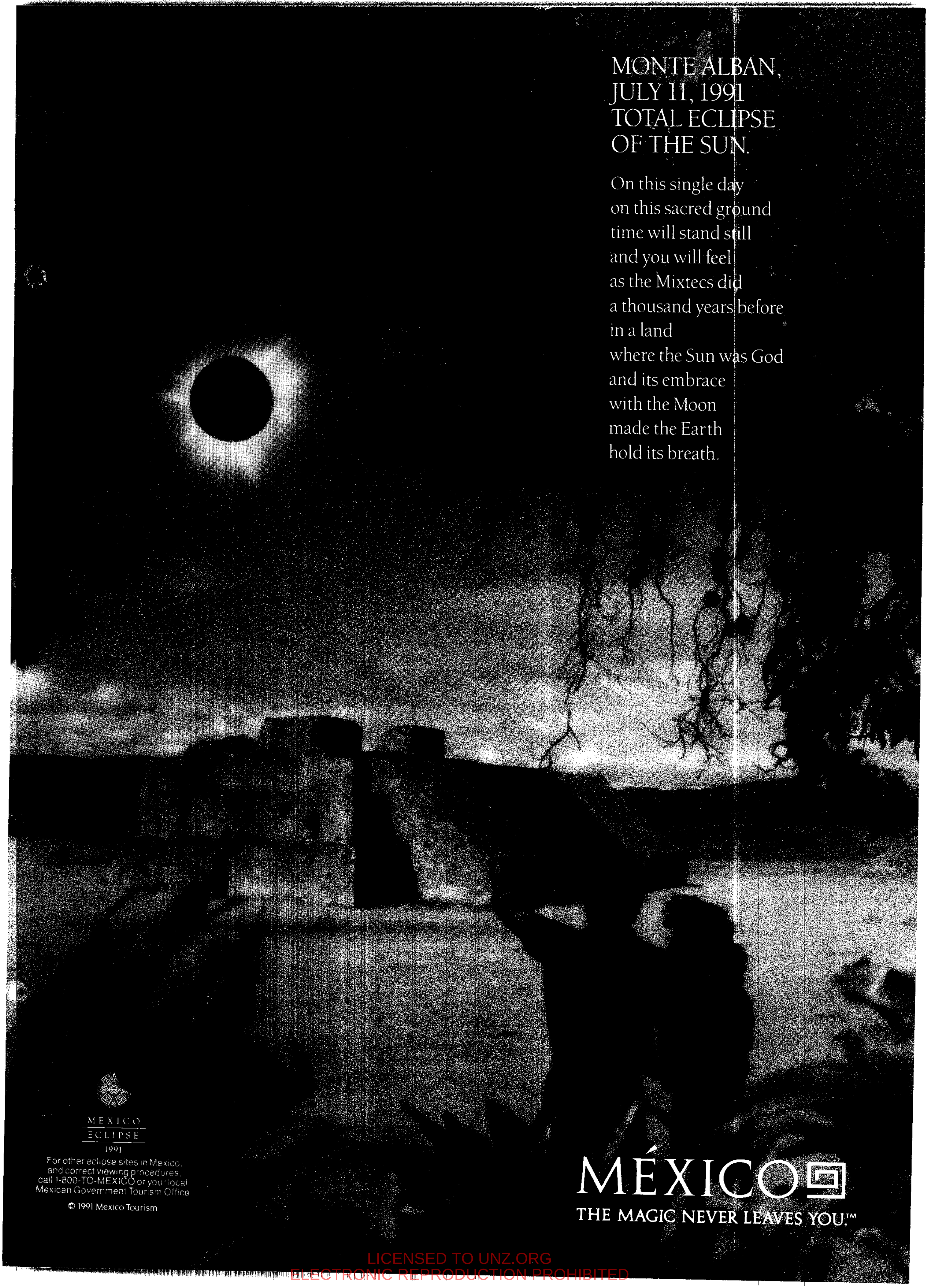
We are looking for a gallery that is used to working with new conceptualizations in art momentum. We are working with the combinational theories of art processed as a state of being. Through this we create art that coordinates the process of molecular awareness with the concept of reason and scale perception. This we refer to as imprintsial patterns. These patterns are expressed in art form to enable their sectional circumference to be photographed by the lens of the eye. This is a very accelerated mode of transport of harmonial movement that balances the personal requirement for centeredness. We expect to find many means of expressing these concepts and art is one mode of expressed beingness that we wish to use.

Each imprintsial pattern is accompanied with its conceptional mode of thought idea that is bordered with patterns that help set the photographed process for further referral by the individual that has chosen to work with it in order to mobilize his state of Beingness. Much of this work will also move in the form of books accompanied by imprintsial patterns that mobilize the ability to assimilate change in one's life from a state of centerness instead of disharmony. The harmonics of life that focus its momentum from the before of its intent can move into place the harmony of events that create the exactness of want and desire without the forceptual requirement of change without recognition of momentual flow.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JULY 11, 1991
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OF THE SUN.

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time will stand still
and you will feel
as the Mixtecs did
a thousand years before
in a land
where the Sun was God
and its embrace
with the Moon
made the Earth
hold its breath.

MEXICO
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